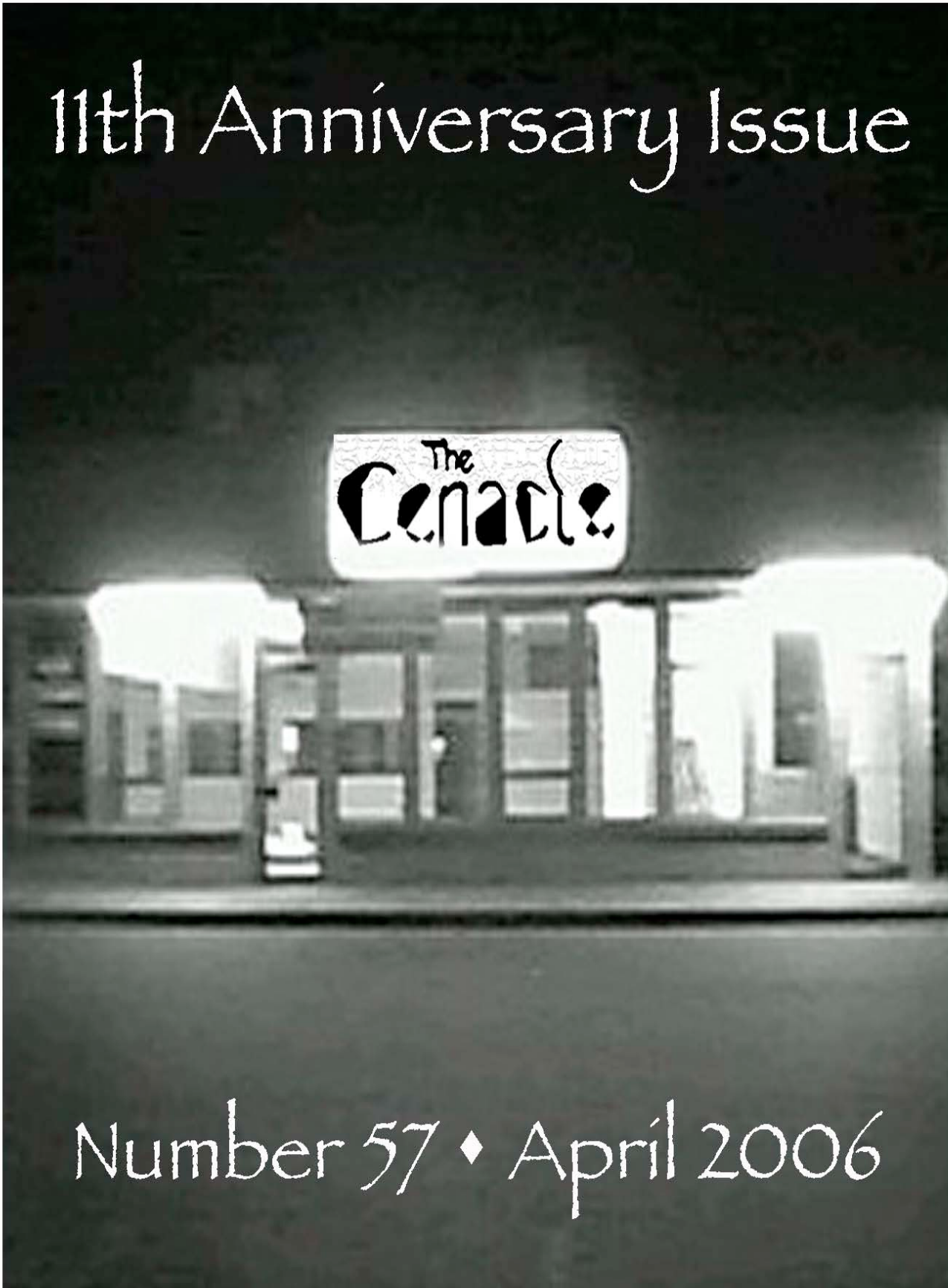


11th Anniversary Issue

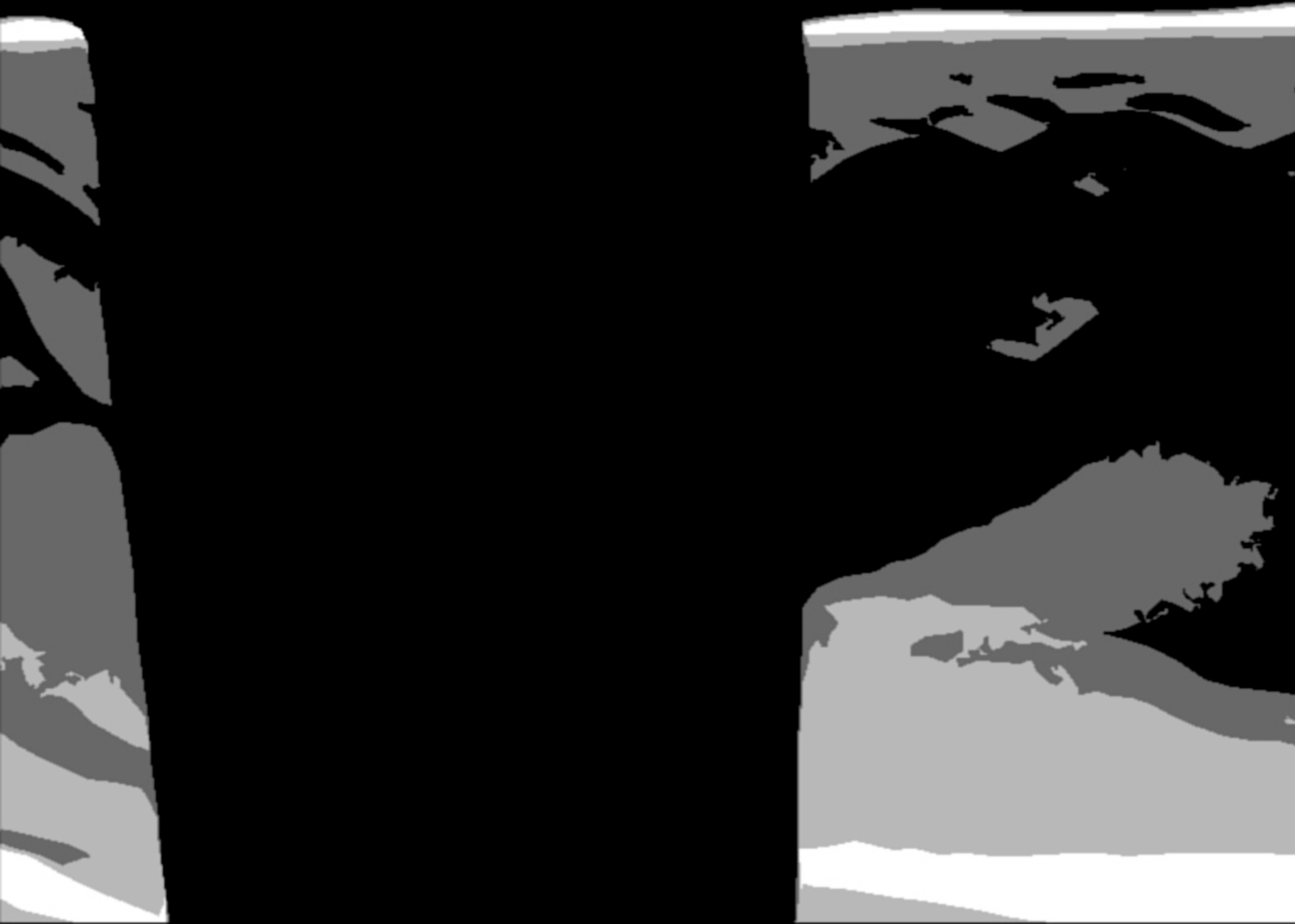
A black and white photograph of a building at night. The building has several large windows and a central entrance. A sign above the entrance reads "The Cenacle". The sign is illuminated, and the building's interior lights are visible through the windows. The overall scene is dark, with the building and sign being the primary light sources.

The
Cenacle

Number 57 ♦ April 2006

"IT ALL SOUNDS THE SAME!"
"IT'S ALL ONE SONG."

—NEIL YOUNG, PERFORMING WITH CRAZY HORSE, 1996
REPLYING TO A MAN IN THE AUDIENCE.



From Soulard's Notebooks

[April 4, 2006

Traveling near Washington, D.C.]

On board ~~New Carro~~ ^{West Falls Church} - to - Federal Triangle orange line Metro

- There's a system map nearby & I see the Silver Spring stop I took in the spring of '85 & '86 from my kinfolk's house - I'd like to ask who they were & thank them - I never spoke w/ them again - not even sure how all that came about - their adopted Korean (?) son (?) would be Kassi's age - was it Silver Spring? I think so - what else about that trip? Researching Poe's novel at the Library of Congress - cherry blossoms - Dupont Circle was it for a play? Did I see it? A book store or two - the Mall - like my reunion w/ Chicago - that was only, I think, 10 years - funny to reunite with places - even Boston would be like that -

Just fragments - coming back to Silver Spring at night, dinner w/ kin - I think an elderly lady - my grandmother's sister - the couple, one of them would be my mother's cousin, I think - they were very generous - I was young, nice, but likely pretty self-involved -

I was getting loopy in that hotel - I just wanted to leave - bided time - then hit it when the chance came -

National Gallery of Art - was I there 20 years ago? A Wyeth show, an Impressionist show. Either?

Anyway, gladness now -

-39-
3:05 p.m. National Gallery of Art - Washington, DC
East Building

"Dada: Zurich, Berlin, Hannover, Cologne,
New York, Paris"

I've been reading Ruth Brandon's Surrealist
Lives & chanced upon this show, & put out a
chunk of time to come & see it - strange,
I'll be back in VA in some hours & return
to Seattle in hardly a day - & there is
a Cézanne show in the other wing - but
I feel right now I must be here & respond
in some way -

Zurich Dada

"Unfitted Harbor in the Sun," Arthur Segal,
1918, oil on canvas / wooden frame painted by artist

Everything is God.

Everything is Shit.

Shit is God.

God Shits Many Colors.

Everything is Many Colors.

[Steal These Words ~~and~~ Go!]

a shiny Prussian soldier, a full body with
a light bulb at its top

-40-

Berlin Dada

Georg Scholz, "Farmer Picture" aka "Industrial Farmer,"
1920, oil on wood w/ collage & photomontage

We acknowledge what we recognize.
We believe in what we know.
We are tender with old rhythms.
We sing sex so sweet in middle range.
We hate what begs for a new mind.
We rage if any come too near.
We dream but only a few may know.
We will drown in a catastrophe of dust,
We will ~~drown~~^{sink} into a black bed of tears.

Hannover Dada

Kurt Schwitters, "Radioing World (Merzpicture 31B),"
1920, collage & oil

A long finger from the farthest, reddest
star arriving, ever ever arriving, a
waited letter from a lost year,
& here it comes, no longer red or purple,
here it arrives, with stamps from every
where, where it is, 4 4 a.m. shall you
wait til dawn to read it? This long
finger's message will not last, will melt
into you, you are insane, it is your friend.



Georg Scholz, "Farmer Picture," 1920.



Kurt Schwitters, "Radiating World," 1920.

Cologne Dada -41

Max Ernst, "Celebes or the Elephant of Celebes," oil on canvas, 1921

It was time to go. We were fit & raising high smoke again. Shared fins as our map, my limbs recovered & shivering within. I had tried to love everyone there but some ate others, and it was explained this is how, this is why, this goes on.

New York Dada

Francis Picabia, Chariot, 1922-23, watercolor, ink & pencil on paper

What end for any flesh but dream of another. Thin winds call it prison but flesh calls it happiness.

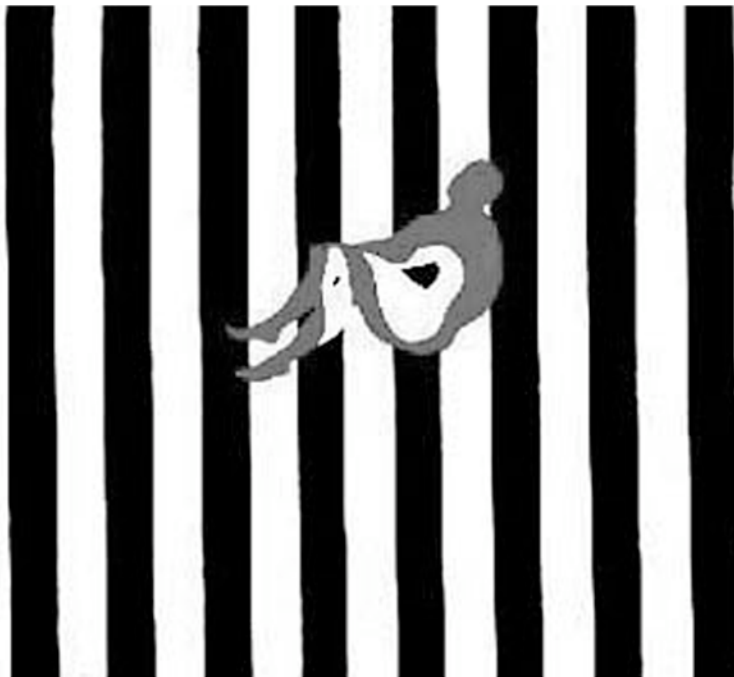
"Le Ballet Mécanique", 1924, Georg Antheil
pianos drums bells xylophones & a siren

The end of the world
like the end of this hour
a sugar promise & illusion.

10:06:27
mus
per-
formed
here
at 9pm



Max Ernst, "Celebes or the Elephant of Celebes," 1921.



Francis Picabia, "Chariot," 1922-23.

The
Cenacle
11th Anniversary Issue
Number 57 ♦ April 2006

Edited by Raymond Souland Jr. (18)

Assistant Editor: Kassandra Souland

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Seattle, Washington



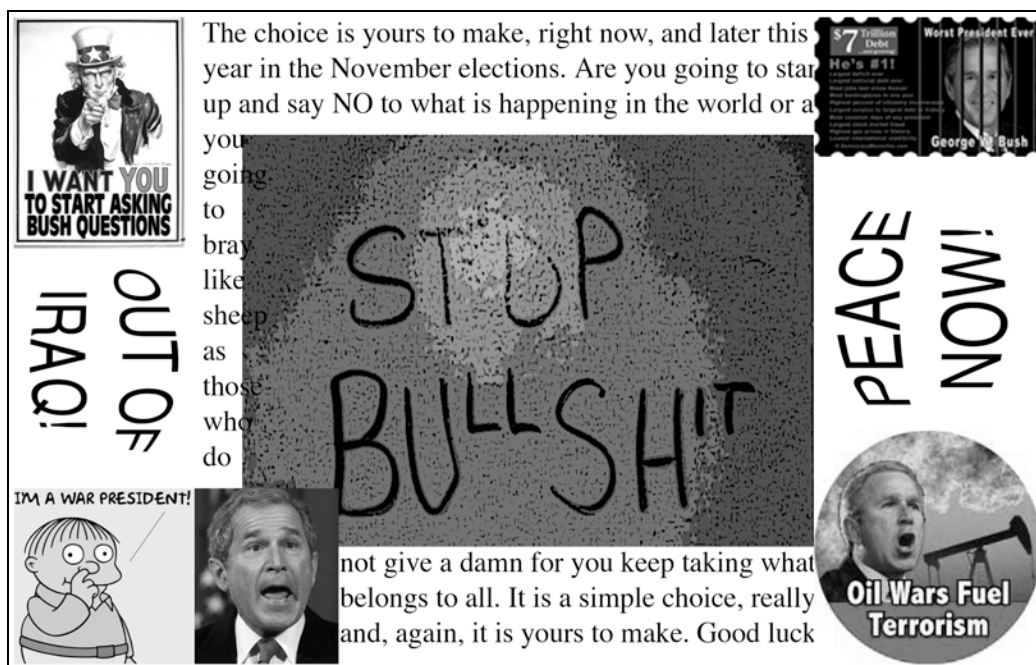
SCRIPTOR PRESS

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Accompanying CD to print version contains *Cenacles* #47-57, Burning Man Books #1-42, *Scriptor Press Samplers* #1-7, RaiBook #5, & *RS Mixes* from “Within’s Within: Scenes from the Psychedelic Revolution.” CD contents can be downloaded at: <http://ilkins.demon.co.uk/~cenacle/cenaclesupplement.zip>

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Thank you to members of the Resistance to the Empire for saying **no surrender** and meaning **no surrender**. It seems like the worst days are dwindling, the King’s clutch loosening. No assurances, but hope seems less ridiculous now than it did not long ago. Keep pounding at the castle door till it falls, till the whole fucking thing falls, and not to rise again for a fair stretch, if ever. Thank you also to souls near and far, years and miles away, who helped me reach 42 years old. Thank you to Cassandra for love true and fine. Thank you to Art for girding my heart and arcing my skies.



Raymond Soulard, Jr.



New Songs (for Cassandra)

Begin

Rest aside her dreaming heat—
her pale-rose bone-contoured heat—

Call to love through the strange years
of trips & leaps, call, it listens—

The bites of remorse become history
as well flicks of kind, red moans & blow-outs.

Rouse

Twin creatures fall to their soft & grip,
pull & stroke, look for your god in the cloud
when proof & glory a million striding birds
through city, desert, crying seas, breathless
skies, twin creatures for the task of making
the land holy free for all, or choking it empty.

Two

We walk through night's mists,
travellers in a strange world,
sleep together in crooked dreams,
nameless things within flame up,
seeming subside by morning.

Along

Along your flesh find silence.
 Closer to release, closer to now.
 Love bountiful but little known.
 Sing slower, untangle its ways.

Noise

Love comes in great lights & murmured strokes,
 come in the slow working hustle of days,
 suddenly high now, pink & wild noise.

Jennifer

Dream of old cruelties, raised again
 by within's burn, a face returns to
 smile & crush, take me close, bite, &
 bite again. Nothing near but dark & light
 limbs, shame's twisting soil. I wake to a
 face gritless with adore, rainy window, unbroken.

Element

A grassy dream of clouds & accelerant,
 of sun cast small between my hands &
 understood, of a knowing that does not
 make tough fists of the mind's jewels,
 & one day, & more the next, the world's
 leaves fell back, & a calm, & a music,
 & a greater excitement, rang high, walked through.

Canticle

'Make your meal, wash your plate,' said
 the dirt-man on the dead road in fullest
 high night. 'Nothing is real, chop wood,
 carry water,' he continued limping by
 me, his cold fire's try at rending my book.
 'Swim harder, drown eventually,' I shot
 back, & return from that year's bite, its hoary masque.

Sunday

If god was answer enough, if world was high
 enough, if memories explained or books
 did not disappoint, if clusters of years
 & bouquets of friendships didn't
 fall away, if any other knot had held,
 I would not be singing to you, burnt, new.

Swathe

Breath of beloved, spinning dreams, shadows
 of a moving instrument, the night's ticking, &
 worlds everywhere unknown & colliding.

Room's stone walls white, poor recall of
 human history, shed years easily, what
 here came together, what here was riven.

Many covers against the damp coast's
 press, she breathes the hours close
 to me but gone within, I follow too, gentle unveiling.

Good Angle

War trucks across a western desert,
 slow in the crumbling dusk, men prepare
 for the brittle night, its many tests.
 A meal by starlight high & shadows near,
 fraternity awhile, everybody made the day's
 end, fright in awhile, heart shot out &
 it all stops. Hope looks far across the
 desert past shrub & plateau toward a
 wordless hour neither death's cuff nor life's blind.

What Still

Many things lost my faith, beloved,
 cities' cool alluring fury, seers' upraised
 licks, sweep of pending hopes in human
 web. Pain more the body's now, only rebels
 strum my mind high. Still, love will not
 go, & Art her partner grind & toughs me on.

Lean

The hours by acceleration & doubt, days
 of a kind but not within, what persists
 a smoke, rattles up a year & another. Sad
 its shape does not keep too. This life a
 room, read the spatters on ceilings & walls.
 Each step about crushes the burn a bit, &
 where & how & why yon closed window & door?

Sick

The world bears its cruel by every hand's go,
 none beauty washes out. Try otherwise or goodbye.

Beloved (20)

She is everything
 I startle, & awake
 Everything still.

Terror

Hands frozen. Night endless. Awake
 to the next dream. No music. No sugar.

Body Dread

Thinking: break down is all, is the sum,
 the holiness to none bowed. Moving hours,
 distraction, then another, truth without
 soft cannot maintain. Hope wilds through
 all, cut hand in the dirt, feeding beast
 in the snake's maw. Something raises again despite.

Revital

Strange grit of voices, foul gash of lights,
 sometime desire for less & less, for little,
 for none. Faith twitches brightest with
 the few knots minds cannot unclench.
 Where the soft, whither next? The days
 still come on, a burden, a wing. What
 of this grasping heart, that phantom limb?
 Evening breaks sienna in the hustling
 dust. The sirens gain their braided cry.

Then

Eventually several kinds of time, slip,
 twist, none. Shift, angle, returns. Field
 in fire ten years ago with high figures
 falling, explain, she asks for a cigarette
 a thousand times & smokes it through
 her tears. Another dances, here, then,
 always. Accumulation explains, entropy desists.

Falling Sharp

Collapse to whorls of dull, streets with
 no curious ends, days flaked of high.
 A beat, another, waiting. Where the inner
 branching paths, the sudden fruits of music
 in hand? Where anything at all. Some face
 passes by the hundred. Hours the same. How long?

Stray Wise

Best mystery falls bloodless through
 the fingers, does not sag & slop with
 stormy portent, symbols hustled close &
 twined up for easy use. What does not give
 way leaves no bones to mark passage or
 remain of any kind. Its pursuit a new world
 from soul to soul. Of no kind another's clue can bear.

Balance She Said

Spark believe me it's in the blood,
 visions & high splatter let fall easier,
 the blood bears unfolded the crimes &
 every ideal, memory loose & sugaring,
 tis blood remembers you, blood will cross
 the ground & recall you again from nothing's tide.

Empathy

World's hustle will squeeze a hand
 crooked, blue an eye to the driving
 heat of kindness, loons' cry in the shadows,
 what sweet potent when creatures feed
 together & stroke the greatest moon's night.
 'Ware the blood's troubled signal of a nearing face
 or offered purse. Sleep fully to dream's
 wise of stars. Wake wide to what pricks, what soft.

Sentiment

Ruins revive in dream, a tall clutch of
 orange trees some mind's sirocco night,
 some years ago, some hours, low eyes advising
 not deep but deeper, the music far on
 stage, alone suddenly, call it the world,
 climb up further, solitude beckons so, & sigh,
 a fragile necklace of blue shells that life's remain.

Limbs

Succor in the making impulse, raise up
 hid worlds for a sing & a shine, counter
 hours of dirt with carved pretties, twist
 from flamed-out icons to what may yet
 arise, old nights of dance sure built it
 high, new ones the only chance awaiting.

Bond

Roots deep as blood, deeper, something
 like fair dream of a private cosmos
 & then behold! what leaves from love,
 what fruit of desire. Deep as blood,
 warmth in the night, sweet as power
 when its coax & caresses a new world into being

Sorrow

The years take by sudden words, twists
 through abrupt shadow, love's survival by
 move, rile, strange, pain dims novel
 to common, live sadness then aging
 sorrow. Remember the brilliant hours,
 wings upon a golden sky, music flashing
 your adored faces, childly ecstasy at
 arrival, at departure, at the stars
 themselves & their wild possibilities.

Intensity

What cold, what cruel, how the moments
 rise up in a fist of light, awareness throbs
 in witness to high green & raging pink, again
 & again the stone impediment, night's wild urge
 scatters in sunny markets & calling
 faces. A man awoke from his crash &
 named himself nobody, began his new
 crawl. Harder still to refuse such lure,
 to take the bite & burn, respond true & twice harder.

Map

That night in high neon, street corners
 multiplied the city's fury, four ways &
 more, breathe hard & slow, this feeling
 of magick surge is ten thousand years deep,
 I will accelerate by this music raising me,
 I will sit in this rusty cafe divan & my ink
 will be night's high neon mixed with my crazy
 heart's full moonlight, & I will sing, &
 I will fear, & I will remember for when
 the crippled hours come around again.

Turn

Sky departs & the years weird into smoke,
 cities flicker by, faces in a moment but I
 learn to avoid names, best to let mountains
 & streets pass wordless too. Suddenly, a
 moment, music high enough to pillar the
 universe & its every creature. A laugh,
 this hour, this seat, this stroked bit of
 green. Gone again but for its clue, its
 breath through the veil a moment, turn,
 just turn! Sky returns but what of all
 the passage since? What fades, what remains.
 What runs through strong enough for
 sentiment & war. Turn. Just turn. Just turn!

Yield

What reminds of the treed courtyard days,
 mind later singing faster than the moonlit
 train, dancing with the dirt road aliens, graveyard
 spooks & their obscure sweets of comfort, grinding
 the last of night's potent in a bed of dust
 & wires, dreaming the walls throb with
 golden snakes, some pretty coming tomorrow
 maybe? That was long ago. The western air
 rouged with promise, brushed taut, sheens
 through my eyes & hands until choiceless
 my old woes & other years spasm new music &
 less deny their muscle & bone to these fragile going hours.

Accelerate

Pain rife through the blue land, no electric
 finery can dim, hurt untold by star-readers
 & idol hustlers, the day was high with numberless
 cruelties, night brings cover not relief. What
 hope, greater potent than coin & tome & fist?
 Twist elsewhere, there's play in the bonds, &
 other hands groping too. Stories of a better
 breathing world outside the city's flu, call
 to raise the unseen & feel the jostle among
 dreams, hark breaks in the days mono
 passing. Not men saving the world nor world
 salving men, what survives the blue land is
 passing through now, waving clover in a roaring stone canyon.

Wild Lands

Buried in this day's hunching music,
 what chimes unheeded in the coarse
 wild lands, what magick loose in shadows
 of shadows, what missed by minding
 the talky noise & nearer hour's glint?

Stretch toward dream antipodes even as
 they snap with daylight's oncome, as
 no faces in the carriage or market to
 confess the great terror & seduce of
 everything. Pretty masks shine with lights.

Blood & the mystery of all this, a day's
 snare in youth bloats into years, a forgotten
 soul's great will becomes history's steel titan.
 Whatever grace or moonlight reveal, will you
 trudge by nonetheless, nobody's slave but your own?

Tenderness

Not enough the past a slough of
remember & regret nor each day's task
to spark a new fire, deeper-boned way
of kindness. Not enough. Freeway's night
herd ever coming, acceleration without escape,
what drags along, shades & stumps alike.

Not enough. Cries by tinkers & godmongers
alike over steel & green dissolutions, worlds
of peril, sure only of blade or beaker's
counsel. Not enough. More bearded, ragged
figures in the rain. More rain. No tremble
in things at the new year's best answer.

Not enough! No bars drawn but what
a heart concedes, no past's shadow but
a soul still leaning back. Whatever remains
to service or slave, call tonight brutal
with new, let its blood & matter wild
the world or bury in daylight's next swallow.

Missing

Your absence a flu vining through
 my heart, hard twist of quivers, shouts,
 calms, & night's great conjures fever up
 reckless & subside blank. Low I await
 your sliding touch, blue-eyed intense,
 nimble laugh, gaze loving into my dust,

fingers wild & slow til I tease back
 rowdy live. Old shades never far,
 pains raise new spikes & lash through,
 thin comforts recall lesser days,
 dark hours tangled lost & foul. Twist,
 quiver, rough pass, another, still love

in me greens toward your light,
 we swim a twining flow to a rich high
 of fruiting melodies kind & luscious.
 Random the world kills one spark &
 bloodies up icons for another. By what
 softs & shines creation, I pledge myself to you.

Coming

None else but to sing true, & true, sing true,
 songs like shaped winds of joy, music higher
 than coins, playing is conduit, secrets
 sought dissolved in melody, power of green
 more rhythm than evolve, the gift sparkles
 in dreams while the suffering wonder how long.

To be continued in Cenacle | 58 | June 2006







G. C. Dillon

Pixies' Lament

Tior, commander of Lady Janel's scouts, dressed in a mantle of Kendal green and wore a sharp-edged, bronze dirk suspended from his braided sash. Silently, he spied upon the infantry troop of the humans. They made camp in a small clearing formed after a lightning strike and accompanying brush fire last summer. Tior had helped dig the wide slash of the firebreak. Each soldier was armed with a bulky arquebus gun, wide misericord dagger, and a long partizan-bladed halberd. They wore conical helmets with narrow nostril guards and muddy cotton surcoats. The officers carried slender rapiers and sported feathered steel bascinets with pointed visors. Many of the soldiers carried haversacks. They struck flint and started their cook fires. The hickory-tinged smoke drifted through the air. They set armed pickets about the area and the compound facilely took on an orderly atmosphere.

Tior heard twigs breaking. He touched his dirk hilt and turned. He saw Hoder the Blind stumbling through the forest. "Hoder," he whispered. The scout released his grip on the weapon. "You must go back. You're heading straight for an encampment of the barbarous ones."

The old one replied, "I know." He stared at the world through glacial eyes. A fluffy white beard flowed down his chin and across his barrel chest. It was strange to find the poet out in the wild, unusual to hear his voice strained, not clear and stentorian, reciting an epic ballad or bawdy song. Normally Tior would see him entertaining a merry crowd at a harvest festival.

The forest branches parted again. Rory came through the gap, rushing to catch the aged Hoder. The young woman was an apprentice to the aged musician. She, like her older companion, was dressed in a plain brown tunic, only hers contained crudely cut slits for her wings to project. Her gossamer membranes fluttered nervously. Both Tior and Hoder, being male, were wingless.

"Take him home," ordered Tior. "Quickly!"

She took his arm. "Hoder, please. Come with me."

"No," he said sternly. "I must not."

Tior grabbed him by the shoulders and turned him around. "Go."

"You do not understand," he mumbled, but allowed Rory to lead him through the brush. "I must...I must." Tior returned to his spying on the humans. He had a report to make. The scout knew his superiors would not be pleased with what that report would tell.

“They are that near?” asked Rohm, captain of the guard. Tior stood in the center of the spun crystal throne room. Moonlight drifted through the translucent roof to illuminate the room. M’lady and her closest advisors looked to the woodsman. Kasper the scribe held a stylus above a clay tablet, ready to inscribe his answer. The scout shifted his weight to his right leg, as he did when preparing to battle.

“They are!” responded Hoder. All turned toward the elder as he approached the dais. Tior was about to silence the aged bard, but the regal Janel, lady-in-waiting to Queen Mother Batrini herself, spoke up.

“Pray continue.” She brushed her light green hair off her jade forehead.

“I smelled the smoke of their fires and their cooking pots. I can still detect it on the scout. It reminded me of the old days,” the old one paused, “—before the mortals forged hard iron or stole saltpeter from our bogs for their firearms’ powder. They were our friends once. Lost children would call our names in the dark of night.

“In those times of yore, a farmer or charwoman would leave a bit of bread or a dram of porter for us. Asking only that we watch over the hearth and keep the coals lit but safe. Or chase the foxes from the hen yard, stop the milk from curdling.” His voice trailed off. “Wake the rooster.”

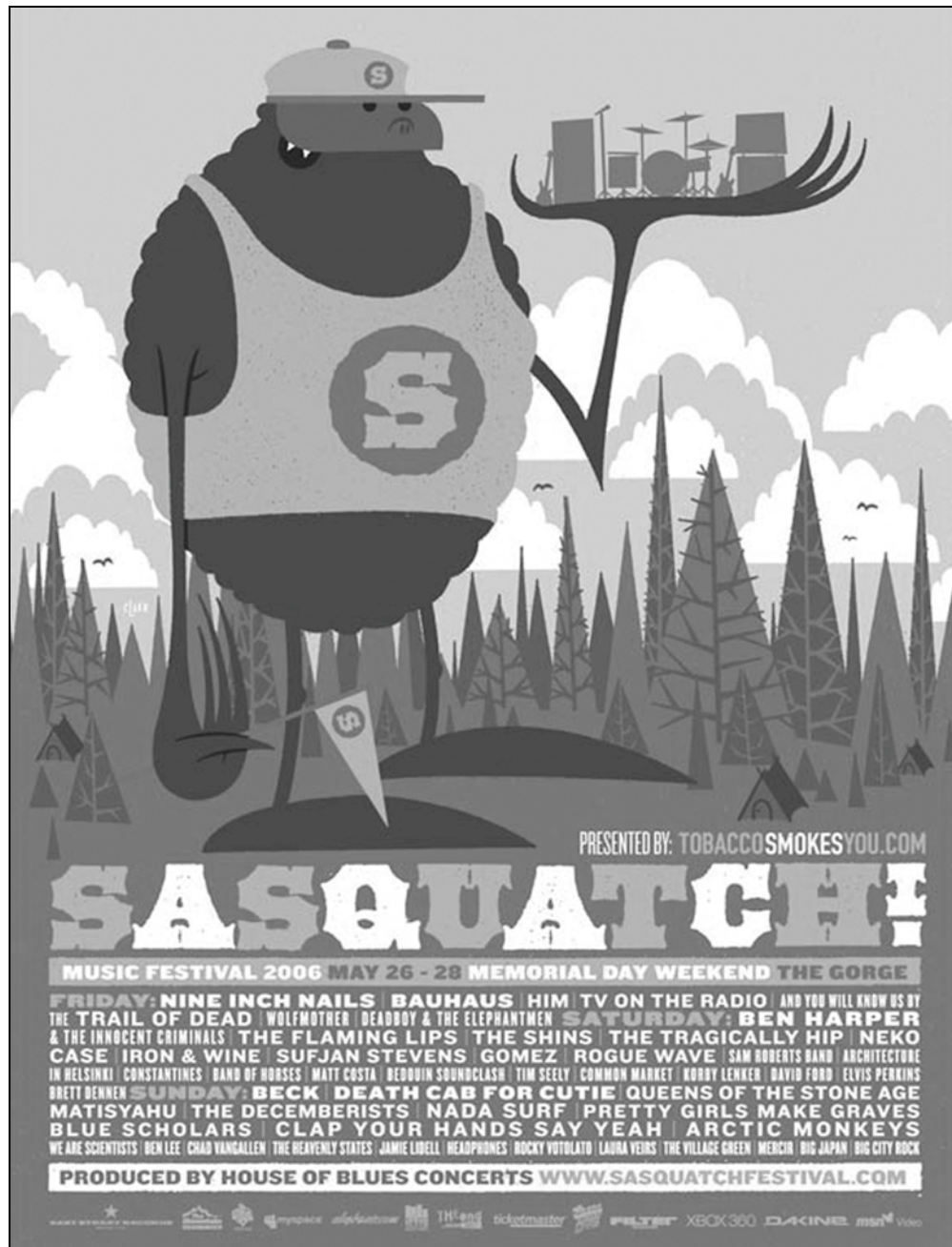
Rohm slammed his fist down on the arm of his chair. “And today, what do they do?” He stood, his silken cape swirling about him. “They tramp across our lands. They strip our forests, drive out the fowl and the game, and dam our brooks. They plow our fields to plant their foul crops.” His antennae twitched excitedly and flushed vermilion as he raged. “These vandals must be stopped before we are driven from our homeland.”

“Is it not already too late?” Hoder’s voice echoed in the chamber. Rory stepped up to stand next to her teacher, her master. She had changed from the simple garment Tior had seen her in earlier that day to a more courtly vestment. A sleek chemise wrapped about her shapely form. Hoder carefully put down his lute. She took up the instrument. He placed his palm on the strings, informing her he would perform a cappella. His voice rang out rhythmic, strong and melodious:

*Yes, I will meet you at the High King’s court,
My little friend whose legs are far too short,
But what song of ancient time will you sing,
When you are brought before this magic king?
Sing what adventures you have set to rhyme,
While I, myself, will think in my own time,
Of all companions lost to death and age,
For my own life nears its last, closing page.
And hourglass does what I feared it would.
In this defeat, I fear not death, nor should.
But I would not leave you, my little friend.
All my joy is only what you do lend.
Do this child—make of me your newest song.
It will not seem that I’ve been gone so long.*

The hall was silent and still. The Lady Janel rose, sashaying from her amber throne. She straightened her taut bodice about her curvaceous gown and the soft light of a gibbous moon sparkled off the opals in her diadem. Her hands rose to her face and drew aside her diaphanous veil. It fell about her bare neck.

“Good Hoder, you speak for us all, I think. What song of us will the humans sing anon when we are no more?”



A BRIEF EPISTOLARY PROLEGOMENON TO PRESENT AND FUTURE COLLABORATIONS

Dear Ray,

Is it letter or essay, painting or song, testament or question? Is it a depiction of what

Is it depiction of what shatters within when our hearts hitch to the wing of a hawk or get bruised anew by the fall of hope?

Is it the small park we sat in one late September afternoon giving full attention to the sun's golden leisure or the hovel in Hell's Kitchen with alarm clock dangling from the pipes?

Is it this April scrim of wind and raincloud that propels squadrons of sparrows or the black pandemic of cellphones fouling the common air?

Is it lament, paradox, or the slow chronicle of faith gone large bleeding into humor and invisibility?

The love will continue as long as we keep dismantling it to marvel at the mystery of its parts.

The love will continue as long as we keep our speculative and lyrical faculties tuned to the night sky.

The love will continue as long as untamed and evolving Taureans like ourselves allow the cosmos to drive the car.

***Yours in friendship,
Ric***



Raymond Soulard, Jr.

Two Vessels [a new fixtion] (for Samantha)

To admire is to be possessed. On a road without width, an endless trail through music & light. Rhythmic curves of splendor. An old house wherein a dark attic containing webs of red strings something glowing alights. A newness yet remains in old shadows. We flood forth every night receding less & less every dawn.

To be possessed is to be loved. Standing nude at the window watching an empty Thanksgiving sky. Gathering wings toward empty benches much delight among the folds. The differences between us we share, the differences between us our gold. Learning how you bounce when dreaming. Finding the veins in your blood.

To be loved is to be understood. Desire vast fragility. Desire still standing in the airless cold. Cities built near rivers & answers. In the best parks grow the deepest secrets. Freighters import the doubts, export assertions.

To be understood is to be abandoned. Six small birds on a wall, harmonies & delight. When the train arrives, do not hurry aboard. Turn away, choose to sail, better waters await you. Neither Memphis nor Plainville. Neither doctrine nor abyss.

To be believed becomes another's haunting. On TV these days where the choices are fewer. At gaspumps in the heartland where model trains sit rusting. Fuck time. Elect madness. Open up when polls close.

Haunting, we travel, invisibly, by night. All of our best travel is done at night, dimensions twined, clearer music, our vision clean, our egos empty. Our juices cackle nakedly pursuing want, roused because the sky is as crowded with lights as our hearts are. The child within again becomes evident, the child & the beast & the angel & the crone & the godd within. No falling, no falling, no falling. Softening, fairies & nymphs, satyrs, aliens, oaks, oaks, clouds, clouds, freaks & clouds.

Haunting, we squirm among new lovers. The wet press of belly to breast. Every tongue as she touches private flesh, learns to play seed-bone. Every hand drawing bliss & moan from ass, thigh, mouth, nipples, maidenhair. Obscure before-fucking a moment wordless proud worth eluding the bastards of this world. Shimmering after-fucking the quiet delight in stroking her nymph smile heart empty sky.

Haunting, we listen to strange earthly woes. What if she likes it rough, a dominant lover, pressed to her knees, mouth on the source, owning it, wanting it, energies shredded, inhaled, transferred, need beyond fire, Godd a dog beyond heat? Want, both nasty & wholesome, every creature a bright whore with a weightless heart. What if he dreams of innocence peppered with mirth, belief with not so many miles on its guage, a body still winged with enigma, a face untrained in shame? The field of new lovers, the new mathematicians of union, sadness fluttering nearly within reach, the music dreams

neon rye, one vessel two vessels many vessels none at all. Silence earned after we've sailed far & safely landed.

Woes for the woman in her empty silken bed. For her questions about invisible energies gliding through her, are they real? are they real? Perhaps: at night she fills with strange laughter & ton-heavy faith. Perhaps: the snowless winter holds something back from her though, offers the music within old wood in lieu of thoughts, reasons, order.

Perhaps: something was said to her this morning, a secret untouchable by the day's untouchable boots, softness arching into challenge. Perhaps she came home to find her bed no longer empty, readying, & what dreams she will have tonight!

Woes for the man who fumbled his release. He is going to learn someday why some things sink & some float. He is going to learn to live & think & grow like waves not roads. He is going to examine his body & his dreams & wonder how he's gotten this far. He is going to frown & say "so that's it" & step away from what pains him, fuck releases anyway. He is going to suffer for a long long time before he approaches his own yearning again, shreds to nudeness, to bone that will find a freedom worth a lifetime, finally, inside the cage with the open door.

Woes for the young who burn night & day. We learn about the numbers & the letters & we listen for the slightest wisdom that boxes of sagely might offer, but little, little, then less. So we dance for music or for no reason, because the puppy had a birthday or a new color appeared. Eventually there is tapping & impatience. We are seeds, we are chalices, we are drones, we get our chance to look inside the boxes of sagely. A sample of moonlight, a book of empty pages, a blue eggshell, an old brick.

Woes for the old who move slowly, keeping count. Two, the lie we've refused to acknowledge. Three, the dream before it comes true. Four, enough to rush the power, not enough to stay up there. Five, beginnings of the doubt, beginnings of the question. Six, something thrilled us today in an early bird's song, & we kept it all day, it won't, it will, it won't go away.

Woes for the tries at three with greasepaint. One a crutch, one a new sprig, one a pistol. Twined tightly against failure, til the air itself tightens, objects, will not hold. The crutch points toward a black'd mirror, the answer to be found in ramming it. The new spring repeats tales of the forest, myths of power & freedom, how ordinary liberation really is, how thin, how nearly foul! The pistol worships its bullets, romances the pending bang, go, go, go, or fucking rust, how do?

Woes for every penny she wouldn't swallow. Tonight is strangely fulla freaks. Tonight every boy is a colored light, most with unencumbered hooks. Tonight a yes means I'll dream of you from afar. Don't chase me, at your own peril. Tonight even your diminishing lust behind me is sacred & fecund.

Woes for his anger in tomorrow's streets. Maybe good can only come with rope & order. Maybe the roundness, the curves to things doesn't gesture toward, but distracts from. Do we leave in the sunshine or the darkness? Do we explain why we are marauding, how we all must grab on now & hold tight? When the cloth is removed, the rooves chucked, the acquiescence given, as we march onward, why the silence behind us? why?

Tomorrow's streets, why don't you love me? There are no accidents, you tell me, yet everyone suffers. Joy, you rant, joy & perfection, love & durability, truths for the faithful, strength for those who will not shut their doors, magic & mystery cloaked in anguish & writhe, why do you insist that anything means anything? Why don't you love me directly, now, the smack of flesh & blood, the heart is a house on fire why won't you let me immolate? Where is my wife, not the stars & the moon & invisible nudgings & tricks of midnight's friskiest godd? Does aught come from my hovel empty of galactic curves & full of punishing yet impotent nocturnal spirits?

Tomorrow's streets, we will break the higher law. Sunshine knows no language. Beauty weaves in and among reason. Desire a strange flower, memory that will not settle. Dream a nation of miracles, pledged as much to create as to destroy. There is no higher law, tomorrow's streets, we will break it.

Tomorrow's streets, golden braids & a hint of rain. The dawn is obscured again, the day staggers, the night strips down & is ready by twelve. Deeper still, the braids are loosed, flicker, the groan of willingness, the groan of fear. Finally to a space where fine ass is fine ass, love a heart, a rose for fucking, tears an honest seduction, the dawn this time is clear. I'll make you, again, tonight. Here's my pen, go ahead.

Tomorrow's streets, they don't light up til you let go. Letting go of your box, burning all of your things, not even fondly, not even coherently, fuck them all, adults have shiny toys with tags & alarms, children know better than to own anything. Letting go of your rocks, the spasm in your lover has settled, just another tender irrelevancy in an endless field. Letting go of your clocks, the only confession worth hearing is eternity's, be quite still, feel the universe constantly shifting, be still quieter . . . there! There it is! And now you know. Letting go of your flocks, you begin to walk alone, it's hard, it's impossible, keep going, the embrace will return again a sliver in a shadow, a humming the ground beneath your feet, the air you breathe. Letting go the embrace that tells the rain, the trees, the stars, undifferentiated flesh everywhere and always, that you're ready, you understand, you'll no longer be eating or working toward something that cannot be consumed & never will change, you're ready.

Let go, not a bottle of liquor or a shotgun__. No, sit not closeted in easy cynicism, the holidays your annual place to sneer & whine. No, the soberest of persons cannot be adjudged by his wine-glass or laughter. No, you're a coward on a couch if you do not remain beside her sleeping form all night long whispering "I love you I love you I love you I love you." No, you needn't be afraid of tonight, it will merely expose who you are. No, & still no until we let go, give up, go to sleep ready to succumb to dreams, awake to another confusion no one is able to explain.

Let go, the books are closed, the fairies gathering. The moon is full every night for the faithful. The way of love is transformative but tricky. The wind is becoming bluer, look for huddling fires in the night, approach with humility & a willingness to be tickled. Still lured by a smile & a mug of soup, a story of survival & one of mourning. Here we are, again, no worries, up all night, trusting to something we cannot name to bring us safely home.

Let go, a box for cocks prevents their rising. A secret joy amongst these times

& deeply involves her happiness. A blaring swoop, within's within, are you trying to make her happy? Molecules & supernovas, her heart, love that endures, she's tried to make it without you, she can't, she's waiting, she's waiting, waiting, she's waiting. You don't know what her epiphany will do to the world. You don't know what her happiness will do to this sack of shit world.

Let go, you must love to be possessed. The veins in your blood discovered, the sparkles of your secret truths, let go, allow communion, allow love, let it spit wildly from you, let your dreams have at you in groups, *be ecstasy's whore*, let the stars remove your last scrap, it's the old choice between fire & the abyss. Let go, it's going to hurt, the cosmos is fulla holes, we must fill them with all we have to hand, allow ourselves to be filled too, allow a constant midnight frenzy in our loins, accept our role in Godd the cosmos the swearing sweating silent bastard fucking nuns & dwarf stars for the cause, redemption not a dove but a blind roaring bull elephant crying for pussy & the wars fought long ago. To love you must be possessed, I am, I am possessed, I am totted & tagged, waiting & pressing, it's a little like death because she still loves me obscure, let go, let go, the letting go has reminded me that walls & rules are less about power & possession than a desparate striving for any sense of meaning. The night is full of things I cannot name, & into my dreams of blank computer screens scrolling paranoia & screams, maybe I should seek from my love a way to un-name, a merciful forbearance, a day of pointing & grunts, smiles, thrusts, filling the holes in the cosmos, but seeking not revenge. You must love to be possessed, let go, I'm trying tonight to love all the stars in my head but not impede their slow departure.

Let go, to understand you must love. Mystery, miracle, manacle, & free. Flowers wryly give us to each other. Kisses modulate our capacity to flee. Leaning closer, there's a moment, & she turns, the light wavering, the music tilts, she smiles to speak, the floor is still solid, the night is naked let's go, something she'll say will be dangerous, mystery, miracle, manacle & free, eyes grazing eyes, leans even closer, the moment shoots skyward, is going, will you twine with her & follow it? Will you twine with her now & follow it?

Let go, abandon your hours & elastic. Dose harder on electric sunshine & neon rye. Spend a mountain of a moment on a warm millimeter, find the crevice to her dreams, stretch her ecstasy into new fields, give her all this for free, she is beautiful, even when half-dressed & bitching, she is perfect, even when telling you three stories to cover up four lies, she is eternal, even when your last message from her is weeks & months old, she loves you always, even when that cock in her crack has long been not your own. There is nothing worth counting & nothing worth keeping, no sinking, no rising, the answer to your moaning is: three sheep in a field. Abandon your hours & elastic, let go, she is writing you a letter right now, you can't help it, or not, you can't wish it so, let go, she loves you, but you can't even harness light to compel her, nor magic, nor music. Just love her, helplessly, love her like you have a chance.

Let go, haunted by your source. Be not furious & alone. When asked I will say the answer is pussy spangled by silk & ruffles, breasts still new & rakish to the touch, cock neither marauding ego nor willing hunger, dreams that still drive their dreamer

careening through the day, trees feasting on sunlight, accepting prayers, spirits ending the day & then peyote moon, my hand you grasped between your thighs, we are going to make something new tonight, we can't resist each other forever, you're getting too wet, I'm getting too hard, we will collide & make & make & make, your thighs have a young snap to them, my seed is on a mission that has carried me this far, there isn't any choice in this, the animal & the godd within refuse all other appeasement so be not furious & alone. Something's ending here, something fine, but just more transition, until I sniff between her thighs & think: home, there is no more than ending & transition, even if today I finally like myself & finally love each one of you. Sourced in pen, cunt, tree, star & dream, letting go means all this does exist, & sums to always home, always safe, always good, even tripping on a streetcar, even the one you want to make on the bus, leave her headphones on while stripping her bare, mounting to everything now, mounting to nothing, turn out the lights at least, & explain just a little, there are no accidents sayeth the preacher, no accidents I say, & there never were. Be not furious & alone, love is coming, it has to, for until the unhappiness mounts unceasingly, the juices are wasted, good intentions breed nothing, love is coming, I'm pursuing this faith myself, it's been bad, may get worse but She's approaching me, can't help it, can't help it, I'll wait, good, good, as I close my eyes I can see Her. She's nearing, questioning, wondering but she's eager & hurrying, one vessel two vessels three vessels, maybe more, we see each other best in silence & blankness, maybe more, but a start, maybe more, she's still hurrying, we see each other best when life is good but makes no sense, here she is at my door best to let her in, my arms open & ready, becoming more still, more & more, I won't move, I have faith, here you come, truelove, *here you are.*

12-18-99

Judih Haggai



impressionist zither

wheat field applause
the sway against strange bird whistles
distant swish, waves of busy tails
lone horse grazing at the foot of a hill
cows intent on daytime

i hear those kingfisher blues
crowning glory on a feathery lakeshore

Between dimensions

As he begins to stroke her
a chorus of fantasies cheer them on—
long haired sorcerer
bright eyed photographer
earthy eager gardener
multi-worlded channeler
large-breasted empress
cretan nymph—
but all melt away
as his touch alchemizes body in silken joy

Every magnetic movement
charges her with fire
as she endows him with the magic of her awe

The skin of their encounter
dissolves into clouds of Olympus
as ions sigh apart
and golden archer finds the quaking target

thunder subsiding,
her head slips down the mountainside
as her legs cling round his torso

honeyed harp caresses afterglow

Unrolled

enter the carpet
look down
dance the dervish weave
head spin the wheel

behind us stand thousands of centuries
singing Sufi chants
heavy maniacal chords
rolling through waves & eons

Again and again
twirl
a woven tapestry
DNA locking fingers
with hands of ancients

Berry stained moments
encapsulated charms
talismans preserved in embroidery
spells uttered without words

Into the carpet of wisdom
face down, heart joined
wrapped in dimensionless time

The Edge Draws Swords and Angels

Approaching the mid-point
when the edge draws swords and angels
a chess game mid-air
played by hypocrites

we, who hover over safe ground
belittle gravity
ridicule preposterous
sing and whistle
as if it's all a sham

but where is the truth
when the curtain falls
the bottom drops
the well runs dry?

When will the chessboard turn backwards
the pieces scream Mutiny!
the space become solid
and dots fill in the lines?

It hurts to rub lemon on ego
i squeeze my composites
i'm left with confusion

this self an illusion
on a bombastic pretense

hush now. let the light rush in.

Marching

Marching into dim sun
speaking of dawning
hoping to find clarity

one cough over the hill
does depression attract germs?
drinking herbal sustenance

how many daisies in a glance
how many steps on a roadside
as Bedouin slip from sight
and long haired dogs offer empathy

I hear the bell toll for me
it's been ringing since last lifetime
a little less recalcitrance
and i'd be there

i'll be there
as soon as I show up here
any day now

Middle of the Night

How to handle the middle of the night?
suddenly all's pounding
heart, breath, thoughts
a flood of emptiness has nothing to say
no explanation rains down

every blood vessel clogs
disrupting, rebelling
stomach growls
two elbow amnesia
a foot finds solace—how warm the blankets
how comfortable the futon
and pillows so perfect

middle of the night
cough climbs out of nowhere
a sudden constriction
an impossible throat with glands of Mr Everest

sweet sleep regrets to inform
can not possibly attend this night
perhaps some other time,
as wakefulness sweeps up dream fragments
and shuffling feet prepare the hot tea

Raymond Soulard, Jr.



Two Vessels [a new fixtion]

Begin in doubt, begin in joy, begin hopedespair, beard & bonnet, desert & fire
& swamp, begin within a forest of endings, begin with bluster broken & humility
scorned, begin because what the fuck else to do on a cold night in a strange new century,
begin with desire & hope lust will follow, begin because the music commands it, begin
because someone is taking the lead, begin because someone else wants to watch & learn
how, begin unable to hover blithely enough to catch the nearly invisible details coveted,
begin because it's been a bastard-long day & tomorrow another & they are piling up &
what other way to summon what is invisible because scattered, begin because She
commands it, lightly, easily & finally, find the beat in remembrance, in anticipation,
begin because few can & therefore it's a blessing to be able to, just begin, a lone guitar on
a darkened stage, & the drums & bass will begin soon, just believe, keyboards too, no
doubts, & electric will join acoustic hope faith faith commands her due in every living
moment, this clear-eyed truth, dreams know it, & trees, children look at the sky, listen to
adults & music, patiently, know that no moment is just another moment, no devotion to
faith, no deviation from it, goes unrecorded, know we each sparkle with regard & lapse,
dreams keep the books & nightly assess what must be done—

But further, no wings grown here yet muchless any flight. Something here
unwilling to disintegrate into either rubbish or repetition. Something here new & difficult,
blames me, needs me, knows me, mistrusts me,

is willing, fully, to serve my

fire, to renew it,

& there is no

other way, the paper won't crumple
itself & I'm unable to stop this
time

so begin with the heat
of a firefly & the hope of a stranger,
begin knowing what may come
as it has before

incantation,
prayer, blur, clover, mandela,
partition, heat, patina

just being
alive is stranger than ever

before

& I like doing this, like
it as much as ever before, I am
remembering how tonight, or
not, I don't know, I guess that
I just don't know

I'll go further
or at least carry on

She looks at me
& as always trust & love & we
fall toward each other into laughter
no, Rebecca, I don't know what
I'm doing but it seems familiar
& appears to have helped me
in past times

I've arrived at
the beginning of this story
several times

Rebecca, & fallen
off the beam again & again
so I thought this was another
but it isn't.

It hurts to begin.
It hurts worse not to.

& I can feel flight like not
before, feel how this thing
is billowing, how the wind
has sniffed its cohering potency,
now inviting it to come
along for adventures &
growth

& the wind will
carry this story high enough
for the greedy stars to get a look
make no mistake this is
a carnal universe hungry for
continous mating with new
creation

Rebecca, watching my pen
go with your blue eyes infiltrating
me now

having me, healing & eating
 me I keep showing up in your
 paintings as bright red smudges,
 backless armchairs, green bananas,
 graffiti in Sanskrit & Esperanto—

Begin because it's fun & easy
 after being painful & wingless—

Follow the music, here &
 always, follow the music,
 it will love you & lead you
 home & that is where I wish
 to go

Rebecca, I am going to follow you
 Rebecca, please lead me home
 Beginning today, Rebecca, my
 wife, my muse, please lead me home.

She looks at me slowly &
 I am terrified of what she sees
 I see

she looks at me again &
 warms me a little & sees that
 I am seeing more happily now

she looks at me now residing
 on her canvas & I am childly
 with trust

her brush not yet raised
 nor her paints bestirred she
 looks at me slowly & waits for
 me neither time nor space
 among her thoughts

“It's getting
 better” she says quietly & I shiver
 & yelp not having expected her to
 speak

she did, & briefly but I am
 not ready to receive her words too
 deeply

I know she contains much
& I used to add to that sum but
do not much anymore

“I’m sorry” I say & rip widely
to her canvas’s four corners
fear despair doubt hope

when she raises her brush to
instruct me in what I have
forgotten—

Art: stars & dreams & trees

“I want you back with me” she
says less quietly & maybe here
a theme to be trailed after

Yes, certainly. I am less will
than continuance. Gravity not
flight. Comprising a society of
lacks machinery pounding producing
nothing.

It seems.

She thinks otherwise
& I do not argue. “Let it all go see
what happens trust me.”

I want to
very much but not yet too much to do.
Hm. The pages accumulate.

I guess I am not waiting on
so much anymore for this
another press

“if you can’t let
it go then allow more in can
you do this?” she won’t damned
stop

I am grateful who else cares
enough to knock around all this
foolishness

she is silent awhile
patient but twisting

“start with
me”

That’s easy & where I’d live
if I could Rebecca Dorothy Americus
born October 14, 1980 or so prolly
in Hartford Connecticut maybe not
to unknown parents who named
her Rebecca but not Dorothy nor
Americus.

Wait. What the fuck?

She smiles. Waits.

“You’re 19”

“Yes.”

“Or so.”

“Yes.”

Her smile queens me & I stop for a moment. Blue eyes wait for me. Neither
submitting nor conjuring right now.

“You’re my wife.”

“Yes.”

“But I’ve been on the run from all this for months now.”

Conjuring a little, now, she takes one of my hands & holds it to her cheek,
kisses it twice, returns it me.

“I’m sorry, Rebecca.”

“You’re here now. You’re back.”

“I was never really gone.”

“No.”

Breathing out heavily, nigh violently, I let go as much as I can.

We are in her bedroom, many blankets, deep night, twined. Happy.

The monarchy of touch, its court of pressures & releases, taps & glides,
becomes a temple with its litanies & myths becomes a forest of days & nights, seasons of
moods, becomes creating creation, water, moonlight, cries & murmurs, becomes laughter,
mighty cosmic laughter free of instruction, expectation, time even meaning

“Rebecca”

“No.”

“Rebby—”

“No. I’m not going to like it. You’re going to make all of this difficult. It
doesn’t have to be a puzzle, Ray. It can be good & last. You don’t have to keep burning it
all down.”

“But I do.”

Silence.

"I'm yours always, Reb."

"But not the easy way! Never simple."

"No."

"Why? What's left? Haven't you proven everything? What are you fighting?"

"I'm not sure. But I'm still fighting, you're right. You must help me. It will be OK."

"It's OK now! We're fine! We love each other!"

"It's not OK. We're fine but nothing else is. So we're vulnerable."

She looks at me in many ways from all sides. She sighs for me.

She will never leave me.

"Eventually we'll come around to each other."

Still unhappy. But listening.

"Rebecca, what I want most is a home & family, a place to start, a place to return to."

Still listening.

How to twine with her further? I pull her into my lap, wrap my arms around her, pull the blankets loosely over us. I rest my cheek alongside hers, talk as softly & steadily as possible.

"I wonder why this is so important. Perhaps needing assurance that the love upholding me, the hands that pass me from one to the next will not fail, that there won't be revealed a gap because I was sloppy.

"But there's more than that—because I am seeking to uphold many as well

"The idea of two vessels is what I've come to use; two vessels each pouring into the other simultaneously; they can be two individuals, or an individual & some kind of group; two groups perhaps; beyond that it can be an individual & Art, or nature; constant pouring, constant flow, like a heart."

I stop. Rebecca has relaxed, still alert.

"Rebecca, it starts with you & me, inasmuch as anything like this starts. I could also say it starts with you & your father, or your father & his band, on & on. As a story, tho, it starts with you & me, with two vessels that are already pouring into each other."

"& then what?" She's with me, her voice strong, steady, faithful.

"When we leave here we go in different directions for awhile."

"Where will you go?"

"The easiest way to explain it is to say that I will chase through my world & you will chase through yours."

"How will we meet again?"

"I don't know, Reb. In some way that will result from what we are going into."

She's silent. "I'm sorry I got mad."

"It will be OK, Rebby,"

"It will be better than OK. It will be the best yet."

Rebecca surprises me then by sighing & falling asleep. I adjust here & there to hold her better. I love you, Rebecca.

I love you I love you I love you

I love you I love you I love you—

Her presence in my arms awhile is enough. I am her cradle, she trusts me this much. Only her hands bespeak her fear; each one presses against me, confirming me, confirming that I haven't yet left her—

Fear I'll leave & never come back to her, forget how, construct a locked door between us where one has never been, reject me on her behalf

somewhere else a man with my face sits alone writing these words while ungiven love corrodes in his veins that man is writing about me because nothing in his own world matters as much

about him Rebecca dreams:

"I'm losing all of this, Rebecca.

I'm losing you & myself & my hope—

it's breaking up"

"Do you trust me? Just say yes or no."

"Yes."

"Will you listen to me?"

"Yes."

"Nothing now or ever is what it seems. The universe is real & illusory, funny & fake. But it's got an arm against your throat right now."

"Yes."

"Ray, don't be fooled. Don't take assembled reality for anything more permanent."

"I'm lost. I really am. Help me."

"For me to help you, you have to fill these pages! This is where I live."

"Rebecca, in fiction I've found you & I've married you & we're going toward the next level. But I'm alone off the page."

“Ray, there’s no use looking or not looking. You can’t control events you can only try & direct your flow conscientiously & with kindness.”

“This isn’t story. It’s psychotherapy. Confession.”

“It doesn’t matter! You’ve come this far—it means something—you can’t give up now—you’re closer—”

“I was happy for about a day—such a fucking tease! To have met your like & lost her so quickly”

“But you met her, right? She exists? You’re fighting your happiness as much as chasing it! You don’t deserve it but it’s long overdue.”

I nod.

Rebecca wakes briefly & looks at me. “Oh!” she smiles. She nods.

I keep holding her as she returns to slumber. She’s no longer clutching me; I’ve achieved that much.

Drifting off to sleep myself, I find I am sitting in a bright-lit place writing down these words. I can understand better how this man feels—his world seems gross, foul, without purpose nor goal—there is a thing that happens to him with his pen & notebooks sometime—this thing isn’t happening tonight—his world is shiny cold & dull—his view of it is diminishing too—

minutes pass. perhaps diminishing isn’t such a bad idea. Maybe the Veil parts only when enough has been cast aside, til little but the Veil remains.

the dream dissipates & I wake enough to find Rebecca in my arms, awake now, frisky, kissing my wrists & fingers & other parts of me she can reach without squirming too much.

Eventually I will have to let something resembling a story onto these pages. I don’t want to.

“Something has to happen, doesn’t it?”

My muse smiles at me & shrugs. “My job is to pose & smile pretty, Mista” & laughs her way off the bed.

There! A little action, something like a plot moment.

She stays on the floor but reaches up for my hand. “Chase less. Flow more.”

“I don’t know how to flow. I don’t chase very well either. Mostly I splash clumsily around, making no progress.”

“That’s not true. It’s not true at all, Ray.”

The hand that was warmly holding mine of a sudden pulls hard meaning to carry me off the bed after a moment’s resistance I let myself be pulled. I drag blankets with me & pull them atop us.

“More & more things keep happening here!” she giggles. I listen to her breathing. To her heartbeat. Stroke her shoulderblades in the blanket dim. Her softness & warmth is a constant. I have to remember this.

“You’re soft too.”

“Rebby, when we’re apart . . . I hope you draw & paint like crazy.”

Silence. “I don’t need to be apart from you to do that.”

“Good.”

Something slides down from one place to another, fits rightly among seamlessness, a breath, a word, fingers, the universe privately re-imagined, a readiness, beyond waiting, bird song, sunshine, the veils are disavowed, concordance in all creation, evolve by staying still, the day a bitch, the night a beauty, the room ablaze with laughter, touch, simple, complex, nothing irrelevant, everything diminishes, something remains & remains, something bright remains.

There is something we must do here, Rebecca, I tell her, saying nothing, something toward which you & I have been hurling all of our lives, something whereby we will never be parted again, even moreso, you are ready, I am ready, easy as laughter, potent as laughter, gesturing from laughter, my girl, now & always, my girl, my nymph, my muse, my artist forever, love continuous sunrise, love sugar & persistence, I couldn’t before this, before now, but now I’m certain as a man must be to think of himself staying on in any form after his own demise, release, & so thinking this way now, able finally to do this, I am ready, you are ready, the room is quiet, all is good, love not harbor but open sea, love both stars & the distance between, love full of light, here & now, more, more, heavy with light, my love—

Yes, there is in what cannot be seen a potency, a power, a real, one needs to listen between the notes, or otherwise derange, but what is visible is most certainly grounded in a present elsewhere—

She starts laughing again so I leave off this foolishness & hold her wordless—OK—but

“Teach me how you do it”

“What?”

“Love without mirrors & trails of exhaust”

“You can, do, listen to me!”

“What’s the secret that covers me but I can’t quite grasp?”

She is quiet but breathing, heartbeat & so I listen to this

I listen to mine own & marvel at how syncopation is natural, rhythms in this universe—

“Ray!”

“Sorry . . .”

She starts laughing again to explain. What do I do now?

“Rebecca, you gave up a lot to be with me”

“You gave up more”

“ ”

“Ray?”

“ ”

“Tell me!”

She is in my arms, sitting in my lap, our blanket tight around us, still dark outside. Her love for me is steady; that’s how she is with everyone she cares about. Her head, resting against my chest, raises when I don’t speak.

“No, no . . . shhh . . .” I urge her head to rest again.

“Tell me” she repeats.

“Rebecca, there’s so much I don’t care about anymore. So much in my world recurs until it is dull & stupid. But this story, this world, it matters! Not to anyone else in my world, not really, not anymore. But to me it’s so important”

“That’s good isn’t it?”

“Til the bastards come for me or even better just take my art.”

Rebecca warms steadily til I seem to be jacked into the sun itself. I calm, & heal a little.

“Keep your legs moving, isn’t that what you always say?”

“Yes. & I’m trying.”

Her heat levels off, feeds me steadily. “We won’t let you stop”

“Who?”

She remains quiet, feeding me.

“Who?”

The room darkens further, & then slowly lights up with stars. Our room is somewhere ungrounded in the cosmos.

I can no longer perceive of us as mortal or corporeal but I do know Rebecca is very near to me. Whatever she is, whatever I am, we’re twined still close just like back in that bedroom.

“Rebecca?”

She doesn’t answer but I know she’s with me fully.

This just the beginning, then. Opening pages of what will be hundreds, I wager will travel with me a glow nobody else sees almost nobody anyway

I tell Rebecca we must depart each other from Luna T’s Cafe there isn’t anywhere else possible really she agrees tho doesn’t move to let me up for a long time—

Late afternoon & we are starting to get ready to go. Rebecca wants me to dress her, slowly, & I remember once ago many times maybe dressing my lady lover doesn’t

seem very important so I let her up from among our nest of blankets & settle her on the edge of the bed where she slouches smirking at me

“No tricks!”

“Mm?”

“You’re sitting there trying to decide how to sabotage this!”

“If you make it fun enough I won’t have to,” she glints.

Frisky muse. Neither of us clothed so should be easy enough to build her from the foundations, right.

Bloody hell—

I decide to tell her a story with each piece of clothing I attach to her.

Start with socks. I rustle up two clean pink ankle socks from the dresser &, sitting on the floor against the bed between her legs I gingerly reach for a foot

& am denied success the feet kick up a giggling fuss & my head is damped with kisses I am hugged most fiercely until I say “If you will settle down, these socks come with a story!”

She settles, slowly, with spasms of rambunctiousness but like any good nymph her curiosity bests her—

“These socks are from different dimensions than our own. Each has come from places that could not co-exist with each other but both can exist here—”

Diminishing in age rapidly, Reb laughs quite wide-eyed at this report.

I continue, more slowly: “What’s curious to me is what would happen if you perchance found yourself in one of these dimensions—”

Rebecca squeals with laughter & kicks & stomps & bounces but her socks are indeed on & there she allows them to stay—

(Each foot weighty in my hand, small but substantial sum of blood & bone shaped in curves, curves within curves, curve complementing each other, warm as I study them, & clean, each toenail, unlike my own ragged numbers, clean & pinkly clear for a moment calm & I peruse each foot, the dimples & lines, & the heft, here is good girlfoot, a pair, Rebecca starts to thrash so I conclude my tale slipping socks on snugly . . . mmm . . . mmm)

Clothing a woman’s hips, stowing away her primary flame, this where society begins, where deception in myth & symbol begins, watch culture smugly wrap around the loin covering, & see polity devise rules & sanctioned customs for uncovering. A field now fenced, a star named, a world divided into sensation, interpretation, & memory. Going to the dresser drawers, opening the one containing her panties, I saw each as cloak & lie.

White cotton elastic but damned if I’ll acquiesce so easily I sit again on the floor between her legs & write on the crotch of these panties in black pen



Rebecca leans against me, arms draped loosely over my shoulders, reading from behind. I hold the panties up for her to inspect & she says nothing but hugs me more tightly that I thought her capable.

I twist around & dip her feet into the panties leg holes she allows this calmly even lays back agreeably as I begin to shimmy them up her hips but at some point begins to fall back on the bed pulling me with her until she is on her back & I above her, the progress of the panties halted by her hands gripping my wrists tightly.

"No" she says simply.

"Rebecca, it's OK. You saw what I wrote"

"No"

Mm. I have to do something. A lack, an imbalance & Rebecca will not continue.

"Another story?"

She nods somberly. "A good one."

I lay down beside her & our blankets appear & cover us again. Beckah snuggles against me, breathing me in & out, patient, a wait of five minutes or a century no difference to her.

In blanket darkness my hands find the greatest roundness of her hips, just above where her panties stalled on the way up.

"You're built with curves, Rebby. Every part of you. It's wonderful. I see the universe in you, how reality, the cosmos, are the stuff of waves & circles, twinings inward & outward, the flow of music in & among itself" my hands reach a little & cup her asscheeks tight & round "these are beautiful, they explain so much to me" & now my hands snake between her thighs, fingers friendly but marauding "yes & here what you didn't want covered more important inhale exhale inhale exhale there, there, that's good" her mouth wetly savagely kissing my face, tonguing into my throat as my fingers continue to query & explain past moan & sweat & spasm "we know the answer Rebecca dont we?" she chews on my cheek my earlobe & nods wildly close to my face "we know & when we can we will tell, right?" she leaves nothing back, knowing we'll be apart, loving me savagely beyond what I am doing for her now she leaves nothing back & will not let me stop until she is inert with exhaustion.

I am a little chewed, a little bitten, gnawed at, pleased, waiting a bit before continuing.

Rebecca lets me crawl from our continually-renewing nest & step over to the bureau again, this time in search of a brassiere. A lower drawer contains a heap of them & I test them out around my own far-too-large chest hearing giggles back amongst the covers.

“Pink socks. White panties. Which color now?” I mumble & select a powder-blue number with a sharply lowcut V-neck. Are those the right words to describe it?

I’ve always held personal animosity against brassieres they appear like harnesses to me distasteful in a way panties simply aren’t.

Beneath covers again, I simply can’t harness her breasts immediately they are too beautiful to cover instead my tongue & fingertips roam their softness & heat for a long time velvety & firm real to me in a way few things are anymore eventually I chase slowly around to her back shoulder blades & shoulders making her squirm & laugh but seriously pursuing my why my feeling of floating right now hugging her from behind, my hands wrapped round to her chest each grasping a breast restlessly, provocatively

“I’m floating too, Raymond,” she whispers near inaudibly calling me by my given name feels perfect spake by her low, sweet voice

eventually she helps me put the harness on her breasts & tells me they are so throbbing with my touch that she can hardly feel it

Among blankets I stumble into another dream in it I am writing a story, one more like I used to with an effort at plot & coherence, form & structure I am hunched somewhere over a table in some coffeejoint likely going page after page with my walkman pumping good music hard into my brain lessay Doors’ *Greatest Hits* & I am working occasionally off several pages of notes just enough to keep me going I can see the story unfolding, expanding really & I am excited looking ahead to when I will read it to friends at some gathering & there will be whoops & cries

“Raymond! Ray! Please!” I wake & my face is soaked with crying & I am holding Beckah so tight she is whimpering

I let her go tho she doesn’t move away from me uses a tissue to dry my eyes & cheeks & waits in that deeply fond way of hers—

“I can’t go back, Rebby.”

“I know that.”

“Sometimes I don’t know what I’m doing now but I just can’t go back”

“It’s OK”

I’m quiet now, calm but my intensity remains. “I don’t know how I got from there to here but this is where I am now. There isn’t any choice but to press ahead.”

“I’m with you, Ray. It’s OK.”

"I can't keep starting this story hoping it will be like the others. Here it is. It's begun."

"Can I dress you now?" Eager & hungry.

"I'm not done with you."

"Oh good!" she cries, pleased, a puppy. A woman. My wife.

"Sometimes I find it hard to write about you, Rebecca"

"Why?"

"You're a dream. You're real. I sit here looking at your dark blue eyes watching them float & hover & drown I don't know what to say or even why"

"You have to write about me, Ray"

"I do?"

"Yes. It's how you believe in me the most."

I nod. She knows. She's good. She likes me. It's OK. It's really OK.

The jeans I pull over her legs are a fading blue, flare slightly at the cuffs. They're soft & fit her easily. We're not thrashing with each other anymore. She strokes my arm, my hair, my cheek, lightly, & I kiss her as lightly on shin, knee, thigh, belly, as I draw the jeans on.

"You're my muse now & always"

"Yes" replies the other.

She wants to wear one of my t-shirts won't have another so I find my black t-shirt from Saloon in North Beach San Francisco the bar Amante urged me to find back when I first tripped West in '95 & I did in sunlight swilling cheap brews all afternoon long to Sinatra tunes on the jukebox a hole of a bar fucking grand & on my gorgeous wife this shirt is the absolute shit & alas she is dressed but glory be she is more beautiful than ever, um, then, um, I remember I'm still nude—

"My turn!" Rebecca says gleefully & topples me back on the bed I wait patiently to see what she'll do

close my eyes for a moment forgetting where & when & how just happy vaguely aware she is bustling in drawers til she discovers that most of my few clothes are in a blue laundry basket in a corner of the room I hear her laugh & bustle I love her more until I forget the moment here is happiness smiling forgetfulness

glowing floating smiling loving

alive neither old nor young

up nor down in nor out

poor nor rich

beyond, below, beneath the varieties

of everything is nothing, a horrid

void I've seen & been terrified

but beyond that something too
as real & as illusory as this world around us

“Ray! Are you alright?”
“I’m fine. I’m fine, Beckah. I love you, I love this, I love now, everything’s
OK—”
“Way better than OK”
“Yes”
“I love you too”
“Yes. Good.”
“Can I dress you now?”
“Can you kiss me first?”
“OK!” leaping into my arms everyone I’ve ever wanted—that person—that
one—She—yes—here She is—

Rebecca dresses me carefully, gently, flinches when I’m tickled laugh, her
mood calm proprietary strange
“Rebby?”
“Yes?” after lightly kissing its crown, she’s tucked my private parts inside
white briefs.
“Stop.”
“What?”
“Just stop,” I say softly. “Nothing’s wrong but you’re not jolly like before.”
She looks all over my face. “I know.”
“Is something wrong?”
“I don’t know.”
We sit on the edge of the bed now, turned toward each other, holding hands,
fingertips.

“Ray, somehow we have to let the world back in.”
“I know, Reb.”
“No.” She says & stops.
“What?”
“My world & yours aren’t the same.”
“I know that.”
“You have a hard time with your own. So you come here to play & escape.”
“Yes. But it’s serious play. I don’t even know if it’s escape. Or maybe I don’t
want it to be anymore.”
“Yes!” She says. Again stops
Rebecca resumes dressing me, quietly at first, but then humming, softly, then
singing

“To lead a better life
I need my love to be here”

I now have a purply-red tie-dye shirt on, black corduroys. She brushes my hair near as long as her own. Still humming, singing.

It’s taken so long to get ready but here we are & there is about our conjoined spirit something again profound & light, serious & smiling

It’s OK, all this
this—mysterious—this

Then there’s a door to our bedroom, again, open, & a voice, again, says, light Georgia girl accent, “You making babies in there or can we come in?”

I look at Rebby who smiles & says, “It’s getting to be like a real story, isn’t it?”

There are Franny & Rich smiling, & Rebecca is happy to see them of course, wanting to drag us all into bed together to play

& I’m happy too—and this is strange—I look at Americus w/whom I’ve had an inconsistent friendship, at best, & we are smiling at each other like brothers, each of us thinking “Him too? Happy to see me?” & yes it’s true—and there’s blonde purple-eyed Franny whom I’ve always loved who was my gift to Americus for all the years of woe & bullshit——

& now I think: “& was his Rebecca his gift to me for all those same years of woe & bullshit???” wow. a likely truth.

“What now, Soulard?”

A good question I don’t know there is no advice for me just instinct & music just a hustling of the invisible for clues to queries I don’t know in new & different & deeper ways from ago I’m getting better at ignorance or maybe worse at knowledge not knowing til nothing left has a name I don’t know til memory itself revealed to be the queer thing it is I don’t know

“Raymond!”

Her voice freezes me “I’m sorry, Rebby.” She smiles & swings my hand around friendly.

Americus looks at me more closely. “Do you know at all what happens next?” Curious, no rancor.

“I have ideas. Metaphors. Conceits. I don’t know any more than usual”

“How about any less?”

“Maybe.” I say it softly, near shame.

“You’ll work it out, Ray. You always do,” says Franny. Soft, smiling.

Rebecca’s look at me is proprietorial. “He’s OK. He’s tired. Ray, we can let you sleep for awhile.”

“No!” They all jump. “Don’t leave without me. I probably shouldn’t be left alone in this world.”

Nods.

Rebecca takes me by the wrist & leads me into the living room. Rich & Franny follow.

We settle in the living room, Rich in his old chair by the window, acoustic strumming so he can listen to me better, Franny & Rebecca entwined on the couch high & happy & delicious, & me walking around hands tossing words jam jam jamming

“We need to lunge forward it’s the only way. We need to burn down the unnecessary & reinvent the rest there isn’t any other way we’re traveling on the fuel of my lingual elixir whether I like this or not it’s true.”

Rich receives my words staring intensely at twined Muses reclining & flings back at me showers of notes to rile me higher further my plunge

“It’s about now & about breaking now the fuck down! It’s about space & its false tyranny it’s about what language can do when it most nakedly rides the cosmic music. It’s about furred animus & coiled anima & how to trade the restrained for the raw, muteness for crescendo, streetlamp for fire, safety for freedom

I stop listen as Americus’s hands blur & bloody his strings chaotic shimmers of notes

I settle amongst soft Muses that curl around me & learn that each of my hands desires to settle on warm fecund belly

Softer now: “the cosmos always birthing, always seeding, each of us part of this process all the time unleashed potency!” Americus follows me into silence, speaking sad sounds with his fingers but leaving others curious, lingering, hopeful.

Silence & stillness a long time.

“Luna T’s Cafe. It starts there like always.”

“& my band.”

“Yes.”

“& Cement Park”

I nod. “Americus, there needs to be more power.”

He nods.

“More power, Ray?” Franny, smiling, wanting a taste soon. Forgets she’s my mother-in-law now. Or something. No gives a fuck.

“How?” Rebecca asks.

“I guess it’s up to me. Better lingual elixir.”

Rebecca untangles me from benign twine to get wifely soulmate in my face
“I’m not going to lose you in all this.” Spake flatly.

“No. Of course not.”

“You’re mine. & I’m yours. There’s no other way, OK?”

I smile at her almost a smack tho not intended. “Of course, Rebbly” then I go for several of her tickling spots at once lands us on the floor & after several beats & a gesture Franny & Rich dive in yes true this I know now tonight forever as a good moment like this can get.

The day is sunny & warm-cheeked good for any kind of dancing available & here I am with my fixtional kin walking down Main Street of Hartford the moment flutes & swirls could I tell any back there on that train on which someone resembling me rides how gone daddy beautiful this is??

Cmon! The world pulses with its secrets & puzzles!
Say again. Say again.

I've learned: this cosmos is good, fine, this cosmos is perfect without being just. Justice is man-invented noise created to rationalize human cruelty to human. Justice is a scroll of fears & selfishness badly guised as virtue & truth. Justice is no more valid nor existent than bad dreams, bad acid trips.

Franny smiles at Rebekah guiding my blindly scribbling form down the sunny street. "He's come a long way since when I met him."

"Raymond!" I look up & Rebekah has stepped ahead of me to keep me from stumbling directly into the steps leading up to Cement Park.

"Thanks, Rebby."

She smirks & takes my hand.

Cement Park. Here I am again. Here we are again.

"Took you awhile."

"I've been, ah, learning a lot lately"

"Are you surprised to see me? A little bit?"

"No. It had been too long."

"You seem calm. No fear of why I'm here?"

"I serve you, ultimately. But to do that there has to be at least some meaning, a little happiness, in my life. A little light to write by."

Merry Muse smiles, gorgeous redhaired piece. The others appear to be missing but I know where they are: I slurped them up safely into my mind, way the fuck deep in my mind, I can feel Rich's annoyance, Franny's curiosity, Rebecca's love

"Tell me"

"Are you sure?"

"Yes. I'm busy"

"Learning, right?"

"Yes."

Merry dresses in the Bougival pink gown with red trimming, her bonnet red with purple grapes atop it, her red hair straying out, her blue eyes looking powerfully but uncertainly at me

"You really haven't learned much yet"

"I know. More danger, more happiness, fears mounted atop the carriage of my mind, the whole thing devilishly precarious"

"More than that"

"What, Merry? What?"

She sits on one of the round cement bases each nesting a tree, scattered round the park. She sits heavily.

“What if you had to make a choice?”

“What choice?”

“Between an end to loneliness, & me?”

“There is no choice”

“Can you be sure? Are you sure?”

“Rebecca!”

Where one stood the other now stands, Rebecca my wife, my muse, smirking at me, worried too, drawing my expression in her mind.

“There is no choice to be made between the end to loneliness & Art. You are both. You’re my choice.”

She nods. Kisses my cheek. “Raymond . . . “ she dewbreathes into my ear.

Franny & Rich return, Rich’s only direct comment is “I’m glad she’s after you this time.” They continue onto Luna T’s Cafe.

Rebby & I sit together in Cement Park, a new bench uncoated with patina, we sit & hold hands

we bark & meow

Merry Muse didn’t come to annoy me, or even tease me really, & I guess that’s never her purpose even if her personality makes me think so

She came to warn what future pages may come to contain, what risk, what hope

The danger of undifferentiation, of all flowing into all, of increasing infiltration

Of stories hardly stories anymore

Of lives lived more & more in faith & innocence

Rebecca scampers off to draw among some luring shadows I watch her happily make her Art which can still be enjoyed & I think of where I am where going no fears anymore just faith & innocence

What to fear anymore, Merry?

“Much”

What to hope for, Merry?

“All”

What’s left to lose, Merry?

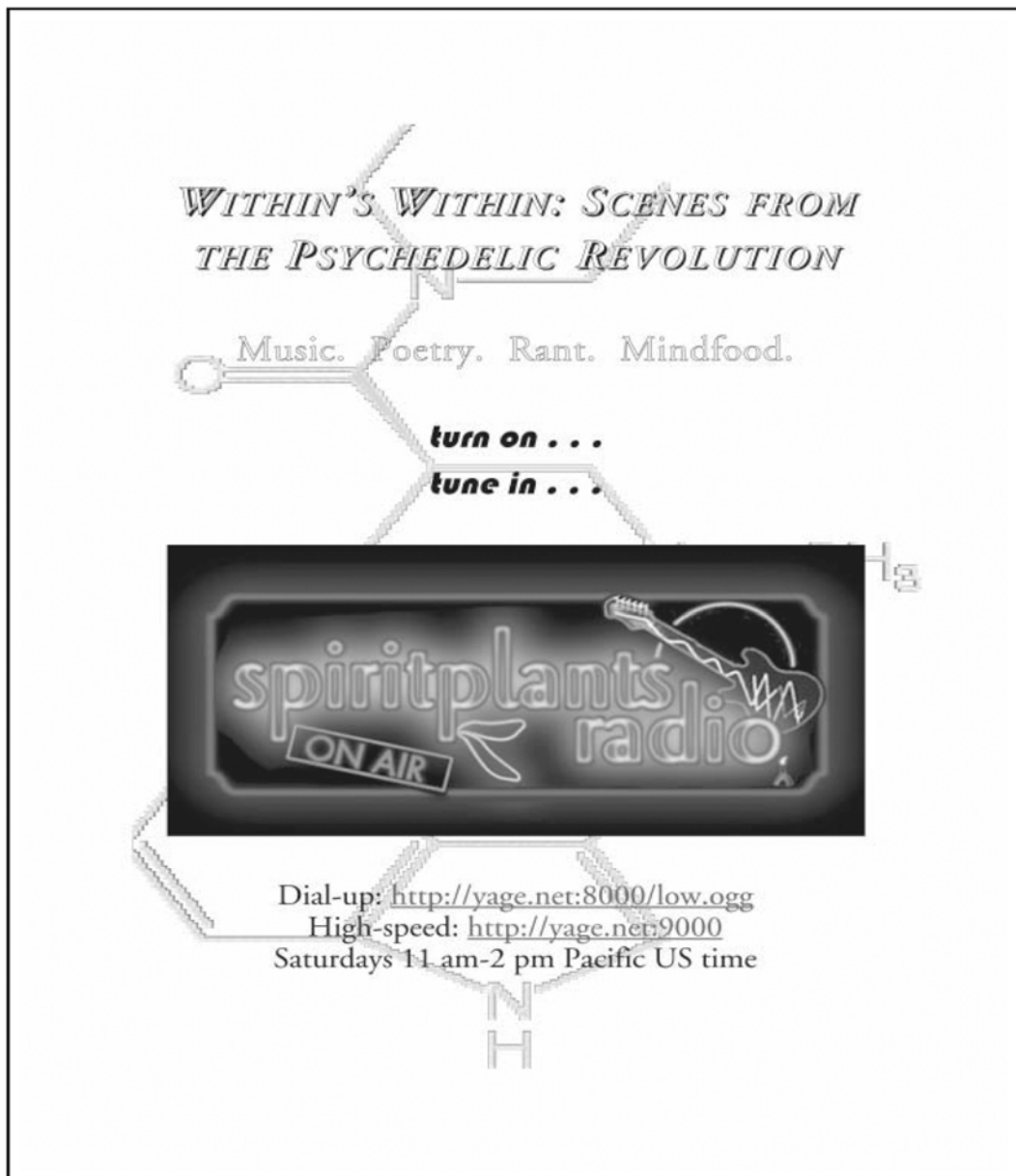
“The rest.”

How much hope should I have, Merry?

She won't answer anymore. I wait & wait. Rebecca comes back with her pad closed up, will show me her new work later, smiling. Right now she is balm, she is love, she is laughter, she keeps digging me up—as I keep trying to bury myself.

Happiness no limits. Fear on all sides.

03-14-2000



Albert Camus



The Myth of Sisyphus

from *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*, 1942.

The gods had condemned Sisyphus to ceaselessly rolling a rock to the top of a mountain, whence the stone would fall back of its own weight. They had thought with some reason that there is no more dreadful punishment than futile and hopeless labor.

If one believes Homer, Sisyphus was the wisest and most prudent of mortals. According to another tradition, however, he was disposed to practice the profession of highwayman. I see no contradiction in this. Opinions differ as to the reasons why he became the futile laborer of the underworld. To begin with, he is accused of a certain levity in regard to the gods. He stole their secrets. Egina, the daughter of Esopus, was carried off by Jupiter. The father was shocked by that disappearance and complained to Sisyphus. He, who knew of the abduction, offered to tell about it on condition that Esopus would give water to the citadel of Corinth. To the celestial thunderbolts he preferred the benediction of water. He was punished for this in the underworld. Homer tells us also that Sisyphus had put Death in chains. Pluto could not endure the sight of his deserted, silent empire. He dispatched the god of war, who liberated Death from the hands of her conqueror.

It is said that Sisyphus, being near to death, rashly wanted to test his wife's love. He ordered her to cast his unburied body into the middle of the public square. Sisyphus woke up in the underworld. And there, annoyed by an obedience so contrary to human love, he obtained from Pluto permission to return to earth in order to chastise his wife. But when he had seen again the face of this world, enjoyed water and sun, warm stones and the sea, he no longer wanted to go back to the infernal darkness. Recalls, signs of anger, warnings were of no avail. Many years more he lived facing the curve of the gulf, the sparkling sea, and the smiles of earth. A decree of the gods was necessary. Mercury came and seized the impudent man by the collar and, snatching him from his joys, lead him forcibly back to the underworld, where his rock was ready for him.

You have already grasped that Sisyphus is the absurd hero. He is, as much through his passions as through his torture. His scorn of the gods, his hatred of death, and his passion for life won him that unspeakable penalty in which the whole being is exerted toward accomplishing nothing. This is the price that must be paid for the passions of this earth. Nothing is told us about Sisyphus in the underworld. Myths are made for the imagination to breathe life into them. As for this myth, one sees merely the whole effort of a body straining to raise the huge stone, to roll it, and push it up a slope a hundred times over; one sees the face screwed up, the cheek tight against the stone, the shoulder bracing the clay-covered mass, the foot wedging it, the fresh start with arms outstretched, the wholly human security of two earth-clotted hands. At the very end of his long effort

measured by skyless space and time without depth, the purpose is achieved. Then Sisyphus watches the stone rush down in a few moments toward that lower world whence he will have to push it up again toward the summit. He goes back down to the plain.

It is during that return, that pause, that Sisyphus interests me. A face that toils so close to stones is already stone itself! I see that man going back down with a heavy yet measured step toward the torment of which he will never know the end. That hour like a breathing-space which returns as surely as his suffering, that is the hour of consciousness. At each of those moments when he leaves the heights and gradually sinks toward the lairs of the gods, he is superior to his fate. He is stronger than his rock.

If this myth is tragic, that is because its hero is conscious. Where would his torture be, indeed, if at every step the hope of succeeding upheld him? The workman of today works every day in his life at the same tasks, and his fate is no less absurd. But it is tragic only at the rare moments when it becomes conscious. Sisyphus, proletarian of the gods, powerless and rebellious, knows the whole extent of his wretched condition: it is what he thinks of during his descent. The lucidity that was to constitute his torture at the same time crowns his victory. There is no fate that cannot be surmounted by scorn.

If the descent is thus sometimes performed in sorrow, it can also take place in joy. This word is not too much. Again I fancy Sisyphus returning toward his rock, and the sorrow was in the beginning. When the images of earth cling too tightly to memory, when the call of happiness becomes too insistent, it happens that melancholy arises in man's heart: this is the rock's victory, this is the rock itself. The boundless grief is too heavy to bear. These are our nights of Gethsemane. But crushing truths perish from being acknowledged. Thus, Oedipus at the outset obeys fate without knowing it. But from the moment he knows, his tragedy begins. Yet at the same moment, blind and desperate, he realizes that the only bond linking him to the world is the cool hand of a girl. Then a tremendous remark rings out: "Despite so many ordeals, my advanced age and the nobility of my soul make me conclude that all is well." Sophocles' Oedipus, like Dostoevsky's Kirilov, thus gives the recipe for the absurd victory. Ancient wisdom confirms modern heroism.

One does not discover the absurd without being tempted to write a manual of happiness. "What!—by such narrow ways—?" There is but one world, however. Happiness and the absurd are two sons of the same earth. They are inseparable. It would be a mistake to say that happiness necessarily springs from the absurd discovery. It happens as well that the felling of the absurd springs from happiness. "I conclude that all is well," says Oedipus, and that remark is sacred. It echoes in the wild and limited universe of man. It teaches that all is not, has not been, exhausted. It drives out of this world a god who had come into it with dissatisfaction and a preference for futile suffering. It makes of fate a human matter, which must be settled among men.

All Sisyphus' silent joy is contained therein. His fate belongs to him. His rock is a thing. Likewise, the absurd man, when he contemplates his torment, silences all the idols. In the universe suddenly restored to its silence, the myriad wondering little voices of the earth rise up. Unconscious, secret calls, invitations from all the faces, they are the necessary reverse and price of victory. There is no sun without shadow, and it is essential

to know the night. The absurd man says yes and his efforts will henceforth be unceasing. If there is a personal fate, there is no higher destiny, or at least there is, but one which he concludes is inevitable and despicable. For the rest, he knows himself to be the master of his days. At that subtle moment when man glances backward over his life, Sisyphus returning toward his rock, in that slight pivoting he contemplates that series of unrelated actions which become his fate, created by him, combined under his memory's eye and soon sealed by his death. Thus, convinced of the wholly human origin of all that is human, a blind man eager to see who knows that the night has no end, he is still on the go. The rock is still rolling.

I leave Sisyphus at the foot of the mountain! One always finds one's burden again. But Sisyphus teaches the higher fidelity that negates the gods and raises rocks. He too concludes that all is well. This universe henceforth without a master seems to him neither sterile nor futile. Each atom of that stone, each mineral flake of that night filled mountain, in itself forms a world. The struggle itself toward the heights is enough to fill a man's heart. One must imagine Sisyphus happy.

Translation by Justin O'Brien, 1955





Raymond Soulard, Jr.

Two Vessels (for R.)

"Faith without works is dead."

New Testament, Book of James, 17:2

There's everything left to know, nothing left to say, many things love, many things danger, every door can be the way in, any door can be the freedom sought, every moment the universe agrees to continue, to change, life continuously taunts with unseen laughter, love continuously presses hard, but oft invisibly, creation pulses everywhere, blood & ink & pigment & dance, music & dreams & the budding of spring in tree & girl

life a bright whirling outward, an ever-deepening tumble within, suspect yourself of knowledge you have not met, of secrets packed in chambers deep within your mind, suspect a plot between elusive cosmos without & cloaked cosmos within to make you happy, fulfill you til wild froth overflow, suspect that your dis-ease was once merely a silly game you played for diversion within the happiness of your world until one day, for just an instant, you forgot it was a game, you forget that the universe is your home, that it ripples & changes as much with your movements as every other's

freedom not requiring

even the twist of your wrist to
resume

love is the honey you seek from world flower around you & it must be gathered, you must burrow for this sweet food & allow yourself to serve as transport for the world's carnal creative impulse

Art is far wilder than what is framed, bound, recorded, mounted, displayed, Art roars in landscapes sometimes empty sometimes full, Art blesses & befouls, nurses & rapes, colors & drains, lights & crushes, explains & condemns

there is an easiness in these

pages while I forget & float, believe despite evidence, these pages mock common sense as they ideology of stiff fools

Sooner or later I'll forget to fail
& a story will ignite & I'll have
justified my being by proving
my fears wrong again__

Faith commands her due in every living moment, the clear-eyed truth of this, dreams know it, & trees, proly the dying & dead do too, faith neither slows nor hurries, faith broods perfectly & smiles rightly

no moment, in truth, just another moment, no devotion to faith or deviation goes
unrecorded, dreams report the highs & lows of every living moment, assess them against
life thus & forewarn regarding life anon

so give your Godd a name,
Yes, & label your spirituality,
simply, Now, & decide that the
bigger conundrum is how to
kiss more than brawl better

admit your nakedness to
unmoved faces, move along
rapidly, you are releasing
bombs of truth that could
explode now, near, or never.

the only path to triumph is
surrender
the only path to surrender is
persistence
persistence cannot achieve
victory til you live the
patience you sometimes
admire

The road ahead has no map. The road is not even a road, no clearing save the spaces
between trees

language no more than the
grunts we exchange about
loneliness & longing as we
discuss the silly game which
is not a game I almost remember—
do you? Yes, almost—

The first word we learn is
love the monarch of all words
cloaked in a thousand guises

The last word we learn is
love confession that all life is
Art all Art is music all music
begins & ends ceaselessly all music

grounded in the total hush of
undifferentiation raised up to vast
fractal flowing

She nears me again, mixes among my
warmth & words, hopes & expects
me to continue

“i don’t know how to embrace
you i don’t know how to let
you go between these two
are all the doubts & confusions—”

“there is only truth, quiet,
dreams & music, forget that
you have forgotten & begin
to know”

my eyes are still closed to
shield me from happiness &
hope

love marauds my understanding
& I flee

“I told you it’s a mystery you have
to believe this! There is no
answer everyone else knows!
It’s fire, Ray, music, time &
eternity—”

Yes. Mystery. Of course.

& a warning regarding that mystery too: the danger of undifferentiation, of all
flowing into all, of increasing infiltration.

No way back from continuous symbiosis.

& the danger of stories hardly stories anymore, stories regarding themselves as
organisms, as autonomous souls.

& the danger of lives lived more & more in faith & innocence.

She is happiness no limits.
 I am fear on all sides.
 We are Art no walls ceiling floor.

The night growls til its power is affirmed.

Come with me from here & now for awhile we drop our names & histories & seek to reinvent ourselves with other beginnings pointed toward different endings

It takes just one moment to begin the break, a startling movement into or away from the face of hope or danger, something, something, a trapped bubble of will & the courage to release it

“Where’s the bar, mate?”

“What bar?”

“T’s! Luna shaggin’ T’s! Some of us are still here & bear powerful thirsts!”

“It still exists, Cecile. Don’t worry”

“Worry. Worry? You do the worrying, kid. I drink my fill, slam my skins, & wiggle the walk of a bird every so often. Just for fun, mind you. Not for philosophy or redemption. Or revenge for that matter”

“Unlike me?”

“Unlike you exactly. Even bloody Americus has settled down with a good piece of shag. Now you, mate, you score the prize, THE prize, & still every ounce of your pathetic hide is darting for exits while you explain the necessity of it all. You are a sad sack”

“Thanks”

“It doesn’t have to be this way. She’s tender, right? Loves you with her whole girlish heart & more?”

“Of course”

“You enjoy holding her & all that follows?”

“Yes!”

“Then your answer is as obvious as my drunkard’s nose. Stop running! Start staying!”

Cecile Grey stops & I admire every inch of his craggy body.

He smiles briefly. “I need a drink. You’re an artist. Write me up a pitcher of stout, pronto, OK?”

“You said we had to be apart for awhile”

“I know. But maybe Cecile’s right”

“Maybe he’s not. I’m OK with all of this. I told you that.”

“Yes, Rebbly. Thank you.”

Luna T's Cafe is open for business again. Both food & drink as Mr. Bob bartends full-time backed up by various regulars when he needs time off, & Guy Lemond cooks weekdays 11 to 2 & 5-8 in addition to his job as assistant equipment manager for the Hartford Barons minor league hockey team. Guy usually leaves a good stew or chili for the weekend heated up on request. Sunday T's is more a private club, open only to regulars, each person bartends for himself, the music & TV sports going all day long—

Rebecca has become full-time manager so Rich can concentrate on his music & related concerns. T's runs smoothly with hardly a tap at the wheel from one week to the next.

Noisy Children play on Friday & Saturday nights like they always have in the best of times. They haven't had a record deal in awhile which is fine with Americus who would rather the band not be obligated to anyone anymore. They have, in fact, been discussing building a studio & producing their own records. But there is only slow progress on this matter. The concerts themselves have become far more interesting than aught else.

So what then? What?

Much . . . much.

Art restless, Art wild, Art lawless, & fuck anyone who thinks they understand it or knows anything about anything—

Dr. Arnold T. Knickerbocker glares softly at me for a moment & says **“You nearly had it for a moment there.”**

I nod.

“When was the last time you saw what was about thee?” he demands, still quietly.

“I don't know”

“Art thee deceased?”

“No”

“Art thee dry of thine inspiration?”

“No!”

No question follows this one. Knickerbocker nods once & stares at me. Still quietly. No rancor.

Twist & squirm. Wanna bust out of my blood & bones. Rusty bridges. Tall weeds. Colorless skies.

Somehow this goes on. Somehow this will not end. Gravelly hills & nasal-voiced cynics somehow to rise above these—

Faith without works is dead.
 Faith . . . without . . . works . . . is . . .
 dead.

Never having begun never to finish eternal hover just past timeless dusk,
 paradoxes sweet electric

Noisy Children is fully present at Luna T's Cafe late Friday afternoon til wee
 hours Sunday morning, a swoop & soar of hours, a purposefully concentrated period
 during which the Cafe's spiritual filaments burn brighter on & on til there is an agreed
 union of release &—

“We rock til it's over”
 “Yes”
 “Just say it, ya freaking artist”
 “Sorry”
 “You were better off when you were less enlightened”
 “Thanks”
 “Hey now, don't get yr knickers in a twist”
 “OK”
 “Americus taught me something good once. He doesn't even really know this.
 What he said to me was ‘Just play.’ That's all. No good or bad if you don't do it.
 Nothing. Just play.”
 I nod. “I can't believe you ever forgot that”
 “Even me, mate” Cecile grins. “Too much artist, not enough art.”

So. It's begun again. Faith the great invisible presence without which nothing in
 this world glows. Faith & thus chaos has a key. Faith stretched & there are colors,
 juggled & there is music, dreamed & there is language.
 Dr. Knickerbocker nods.

Another fragment in the skein, Rebecca & I sitting in the manager's office, her
 office, & she's here solely to do bookkeeping work on the Cafe's computer, a Macintosh
 at my insistence. Rebecca prefers to do manager-related work at the joint's bar, our pair
 of stools in the far corner or in the restaurant at our little table neath the front window;
 both these places we share with Rich & Franny.

But sooner or later the bookkeeping needs to be recorded in the computer's files.
 I'm sitting on the couch, Reb at her desk, scowling, the old stereo's turntable cranking
 out some Byrds.

“You could help me”
 “You have to learn, Rebby. If you ask a question I'll answer it.”
 “Do you love me?”
 “Forever. No fooling.”

“Are you OK?”

“I’m better.”

“What happens next?”

“I don’t ever know anymore”

“Is it better this way than it used to be?”

“Better. Worse.”

“What happens next?”

“I don’t even know anymore”

“Is it better this way than it used to be?”

“Better. Worse.”

Rebecca quiets & I hear the tapping of her fingers on the keyboard, clicks, pings, arhythmic but continuous. She wants to finish so we can play. I sit quietly, waiting, floating—

I think: I’m best when I act like I’ve nothing to lose, the truth comes tumbling out of me rapids—wild & mostly good; when I think something’s mine, I have to nurture it, protect it, not fuck it up, I go stiff & sullen; but when life is the dream it is, a mystery pulsing as tree, star, a pretty girl’s laugh, music, night, yes, something happens that could not be called victory but can sometimes be called Art.

The tapping has stopped & the pretty girl mystery is smiling at me patient & quiet I don’t have to please her she’s pleased already & I can only do better—

“Done, Rebbby?”

She nods. Still smiling. This is easy as long as I continue to live it without sure knowledge.

She flips the LP & sets it to playing. We settle enmeshed, smiling, living, not knowing.

Living. Not knowing.

Days go by between last word & next. Shivers & sweats of silence. Rebecca waits, hovers, stills
speaks—

“Ray, are you OK?”

“I’m trying, Rebbby. You know that.”

“You *always* try, Ray. I know that too.”

“Can I help you?”

“Stay near.”

“Anything else?”

“Keep believing”

“In you?”

“Me. Art. Love. Your dad. Franny. Luna T’s.”

“Ray, I do all that stuff always.”

“Good.”

We hold hands, shade back into the silence. It’s better this time. She’s with me this time.

Night is always the best, deeper, clearer, funnier, wilder, more hopeful because more mysterious, sincere, sonorous, ludicrous

“cherry vanilla” Rebecca growls moist lips into my ear

scriptures of fire

principles penned from wells of darkness, good, evil, too complex, too simple

“cherry vanilla & peyote” Rebecca repeats, & continues

restless & funny she wants to paint me & frame me

possible?

mmm. mmm.

We return to the bar & some of the regulars note pleased the somewhat clearer look in mine eyes.

Knickerbocker, hehe, sends over to me a cup of black coffee laced with Jack Daniel’s, a unique gesture on his part

I nod & smile his way, slightly, & would leave it at that when Rebecca pushes me off my stool

“Go.”

“OK.”

Suddenly she pulls me back. “Just remember: you’re my piece of canvas later.” Gives my earlobe a rough gnaw.

“It will never end” he says, softly & briefly

“No” I say, choking my way past initial sips of whiskey’d coffee.

“Then what doth thee intend regarding this truth?” he demands, voice expanding familiarly.

“I don’t know”

“Truly continued plummet in thine native realm can only foretell darkly here!”

I nod. Sip harder. “Advise me, old man. Prayer? What?”

From nowhere Knickerbocker’s stick careens through the air to **KRAK!** the counter between our two cups.

“Thine devotion emerges from thine pen! Thy faith in the devine, thy urgency toward greater understanding tumbles across the page!”

I nod.

We both sip hard at our coffees I glance over at Rebecca & discover her sketching our joined portrait. A memory flashes 'cross my mind gazing 'pon her smiling 3 a.m. waking she's on top of me moving into position to mount me same smile

“Saloon-keeper!” Knickerbocker suddenly roars. **“In this perilous time during which I am ministering to the soul of this perilously nigh-to-lost young man, it is resoundingly necessary that the flow of libation to each of our throats remain completely constant! Therefore recall thine younger days when thine feet travelled at a pace if not swift then at least visible! Our lord if humbly beseeched may grant even to the infirm an occasional moment of animation!”**

Mr. Bob the barman pours coffee & whiskey straight through this speech & from my especially close vantage point I can detect the tremors of smile about his lips.

His eyes are blue, I notice first time blue not like Beckah's dark & humming but light blue hard & studying the blue of a man whose questions have never received

My hand is stayed. “Don't,” he advises. Adds no more.

I nod. Kill my coffee with ease & foolishness, return to Rebecca. A glass of cherry cola awaits me, Mr. Bob having been instructed in my post-alcohol phase.

Rebecca smiles at me, knowing far better than to ask if I'm alright.

We leave the bar after a little while & walk together from downtown to the Berlin Before the Fall neighborhood

No words but no pressure

Rebecca's black artbag is slung over her shoulder. She smiles lightly at trees, faces. Her smile deepens when it touches me.

“Where have I been, Rebecca?” I ask, afraid to look at her.

She says without pause. “You've been with me.”

The grip of our hands tightens. “Always. With me.”

End of May, spring's at last elected to stay. Blue sky, cool air. Green & growing everywhere.

Our table is round, metal, black, perforated with round & diamond holes of various kinds. Rebecca fetches soda & cookies, nesting as women often do. Without task, I sit & enjoy. I breathe deeply in & out.

Rebecca removes pencils & paper from her artpad & proceeds to play. She watches me, but subtly.

There are too many faces in the courtyard to describe. I notice a few smiles. Not many hats. Women with long hair. Men with short. Eyeglasses. Coffee cups. Repose.

Rebecca lures several small brown birds close with crumbs then draws them. Her left hand tosses crumbs her right hand sketches.

Sunlight still but blocked by buildings. Chesspieces click.

“Where have I been again?”

“With me. Always.”

With her. Always.

There’s everything left to know, everything left to say, everyone left to love,
every danger whatever way

Every door offers a chapter

Every moment contains a note

love there is no choice

freedom always

the moon is full, always

creation pulses everywhere,
blood & ink & color & dance,
music & dreams, another face
hurrying, another face smiling

life a bright whirling outward,
an ever-deepening tumble within,
suspect yourself of starshine,
wake up to your own happiness,

the universe a tricky game
love its abundant food

Art is the answer
Art is the question

I look up as Rebecca glances down, still tingling with smile & love.

“I’ve been here all along?”

“With me. Yes.”

“With you?”

“Yes.”

Now she looks at me & thus all is brighter.

I kiss her & again. That which stays is that which matters whether in flesh
memory or dream.

The evening lights come on. The traffic heavies. The courtyard fills even as the
air—

“It’s OK. You can stop.”

“Stop?”

“For now. Like me.”

I stop for now. Paused but never still. Both of us.

Two vessels filling but never full.

5-31-2000



Albert Hofmann



The Mysteries of Eleusis

from *LSD My Problem Child*, Chapter 11, 1981.

The notion of reality as the self juxtaposed to the world, in confrontation with the outer world, began to form itself . . . in the southern portion of the European continent in Greek antiquity. No doubt people at that time knew the suffering that was connected with such a cleft reality consciousness. The Greek genius tried the cure by supplementing the multiformed and richly colored, sensual as well as deeply sorrowful Apollonian world view created by the subject/object cleavage, with the Dionysian world of experience, in which this cleavage is abolished in ecstatic inebriation. Nietzsche writes in *The Birth of Tragedy*:

It is either through the influence of narcotic potions, of which all primitive peoples and races speak in hymns, or through the powerful approach of spring, penetrating with joy all of nature, that those Dionysian stirrings arise, which in their intensification lead the individual to forget himself completely . . . Not only does the bond between man and man come to be forged once again by the magic of the Dionysian rite, but alienated, hostile, or subjugated nature again celebrates her reconciliation with her prodigal son, man.

The Mysteries of Eleusis, which were celebrated annually in the fall, over an interval of approximately 2,000 years, from about 1500 B.C. until the fourth century A.D., were intimately connected with the ceremonies and festivals in honor of the god Dionysus. These Mysteries were established by the goddess of agriculture, Demeter, as thanks for the recovery of her daughter Persephone, whom Hades, the god of the underworld, had abducted. A further thank offering was the ear of grain, which was presented by the two goddesses to Triptolemus, the first high priest of Eleusis. They taught him the cultivation of grain, which Triptolemus then disseminated over the whole globe. Persephone, however, was not always allowed to remain with her mother, because she had taken nourishment from Hades, contrary to the order of the highest gods. As punishment she had to return to the underworld for a part of the year. During this time, it was winter on the earth, the plants died and were withdrawn into the ground, to awaken to new life early in the year with Persephone's journey to earth.

The myth of Demeter, Persephone, Hades, and the other gods, which was enacted as a drama, formed, however, only the external framework of events. The climax of the yearly ceremonies, which began with a procession from Athens to Eleusis lasting several days, was the concluding ceremony with the initiation, which took place in the night. The initiates were forbidden by penalty of death to divulge what they had learned, beheld, in the innermost, holiest chamber of the temple, the telesterion (goal). Not one of the

multitude that were initiated into the secret of Eleusis has ever done this. Pausanias, Plato, many Roman emperors like Hadrian and Marcus Aurelius, and many other known personages of antiquity were party to this initiation. It must have been an illumination, a visionary glimpse of a deeper reality, an insight into the true basis of the universe. That can be concluded from the statements of initiates about the value, about the importance of the vision. Thus it is reported in a Homeric Hymn: "Blissful is he among men on Earth, who has beheld that! He who has not been initiated into the holy Mysteries, who has had no part therein, remains a corpse in gloomy darkness." Pindar speaks of the Eleusinian benediction with the following words: "Blissful is he, who after having beheld this enters on the way beneath the Earth. He knows the end of life as well as its divinely granted beginning." Cicero, also a famous initiate, likewise put in first position the splendor that fell upon his life from Eleusis, when he said: "Not only have we received the reason there, that we may live in joy, but also, besides, that we may die with better hope."

How could the mythological representation of such an obvious occurrence, which runs its course annually before our eyes—the seed grain that is dropped into the earth, dies there, in order to allow a new plant, new life, to ascend into the light—prove to be such a deep, comforting experience as that attested by the cited reports? It is traditional knowledge that the initiates were furnished with a potion, the kykeon, for the final ceremony. It is also known that barley extract and mint were ingredients of the kykeon. Religious scholars and scholars of mythology, like Karl Kerényi, from whose book on the Eleusinian Mysteries (Rhein-Verlag, Zurich, 1962) the preceding statements were taken, and with whom I was associated in relation to the research on this mysterious potion [In the English publication of Kerényi's book *Eleusis* (Schocken Books, New York, 1977) a reference is made to this collaboration.], are of the opinion that the kykeon was mixed with an hallucinogenic drug [In *The Road to Eleusis* by R. Gordon Wasson, Albert Hofmann, and Carl A. P. Ruck (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, New York, 1978) the possibility is discussed that the kykeon could have acted through an LSD-like preparation of ergot]. That would make understandable the ecstatic-visionary experience of the Demeter-Persephone myth as a symbol of the cycle of life and death in both a comprehensive and timeless reality.

When the Gothic king Alarich, coming from the north, invaded Greece in 396 A.D. and destroyed the sanctuary of Eleusis, it was not only the end of a religious center, but it also signified the decisive downfall of the ancient world. With the monks that accompanied Alarich, Christianity penetrated into the country that must be regarded as the cradle of European culture.

The cultural-historical meaning of the Eleusinian Mysteries, their influence on European intellectual history, can scarcely be overestimated. Here suffering humankind found a cure for its rational, objective, cleft intellect, in a mystical totality experience, that let it believe in immortality, in an everlasting existence.

This belief had survived in early Christianity, although with other symbols. It is found as a promise, even in particular passages of the Gospels, most clearly in the Gospel according to John, as in Chapter 14: 120. Jesus speaks to his disciples, as he takes leave of them:

And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever;

Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also.

At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.

This promise constitutes the heart of my Christian beliefs and my call to natural-scientific research: we will attain to knowledge of the universe through the spirit of truth, and thereby to understanding of our being one with the deepest, most comprehensive reality, God.

Ecclesiastical Christianity, determined by the duality of creator and creation has, however, with its nature-alienated religiosity, largely obliterated the Eleusinian-Dionysian legacy of antiquity. In the Christian sphere of belief, only special blessed men have attested to a timeless, comforting reality, experienced in a spontaneous vision, an experience to which in antiquity the elite of innumerable generations had access through the initiation at Eleusis. The *unio mystica* of Catholic saints, and the visions that the representatives of Christian mysticism—Jakob Boehme, Meister Eckhart, Angelus Silesius, Thomas Traherne, William Blake, and others describe in their writings—are obviously essentially related to the enlightenment that the initiates to the Eleusinian Mysteries experienced.

The fundamental importance of a mystical experience, for the recovery of people in Western industrial societies who are sickened by a one-sided, rational, materialistic world view, is today given primary emphasis, not only by adherents to Eastern religious movements like Zen Buddhism, but also by leading representatives of academic psychiatry. Of the appropriate literature, we will here refer only to the books of Balthasar Staehelin, the Basel psychiatrist working in Zurich [*Haben und Sein* (1969), *Die Welt als Du* (1970), *Urvertrauen und zweite Wirklichkeit* (1973), and *Der finale Mensch* (1976); all published by Theologischer Verlag, Zurich]. They make reference to numerous other authors who deal with the same problem. Today a type of “metamedicine,” “metapsychology,” and “metapsychiatry” is beginning to call upon the metaphysical element in people, which manifests itself as an experience of a deeper, duality-surmounting reality, and to make this element a basic healing principle in therapeutic practice.

In addition, it is most significant that not only medicine but also wider circles of our society consider the overcoming of the dualistic, cleft world view to be a prerequisite and basis for the recovery and spiritual renewal of occidental civilization and culture. This renewal could lead to the renunciation of the materialistic philosophy of life and the

development of a new reality consciousness.

As a path to the perception of a deeper, comprehensive reality, in which the experiencing individual is also sheltered, meditation, in its different forms, occupies a prominent place today. The essential difference between meditation and prayer in the usual sense, which is based upon the duality of creator-creation, is that meditation aspires to the abolishment of the I-you barrier by a fusing of object and subject, of sender and receiver, of objective reality and self.

Objective reality, the world view produced by the spirit of scientific inquiry, is the myth of our time. It has replaced the ecclesiastical-Christian and mythical-Apollonian world view.

But this ever broadening factual knowledge, which constitutes objective reality, need not be a desecration. On the contrary, if it only advances deep enough, it inevitably leads to the inexplicable, primal ground of the universe: the wonder, the mystery of the divine—in the microcosm of the atom, in the macrocosm of the spiral nebula, in the seeds of plants, in the body and soul of people.

Meditation begins at the limits of objective reality, at the farthest point yet reached by rational knowledge and perception. Meditation thus does not mean rejection of objective reality; on the contrary, it consists of a penetration to deeper dimensions of reality. It is not escape into an imaginary dream world; rather it seeks after the comprehensive truth of objective reality, by simultaneous, stereoscopic contemplation of its surfaces and depths.

It could become of fundamental importance, and be not merely a transient fashion of the present, if more and more people today would make a daily habit of devoting an hour, or at least a few minutes, to meditation. As a result of the meditative penetration and broadening of the natural-scientific world view, a new, deepened reality consciousness would have to evolve, which would increasingly become the property of all humankind. This could become the basis of a new religiosity, which would not be based on belief in the dogmas of various religions, but rather on perception through the “spirit of truth.” What is meant here is a perception, a reading and understanding of the text at first hand, “out of the book that God’s finger has written” (Paracelsus), out of the creation.

The transformation of the objective world view into a deepened and thereby religious reality consciousness can be accomplished gradually, by continuing practice of meditation. It can also come about, however, as a sudden enlightenment; a visionary experience. It is then particularly profound, blessed, and meaningful. Such a mystical experience may nevertheless “not be induced even by decade-long meditation,” as Balthasar Staehelin writes. Also, it does not happen to everyone, although the capacity for mystical experience belongs to the essence of human spirituality.

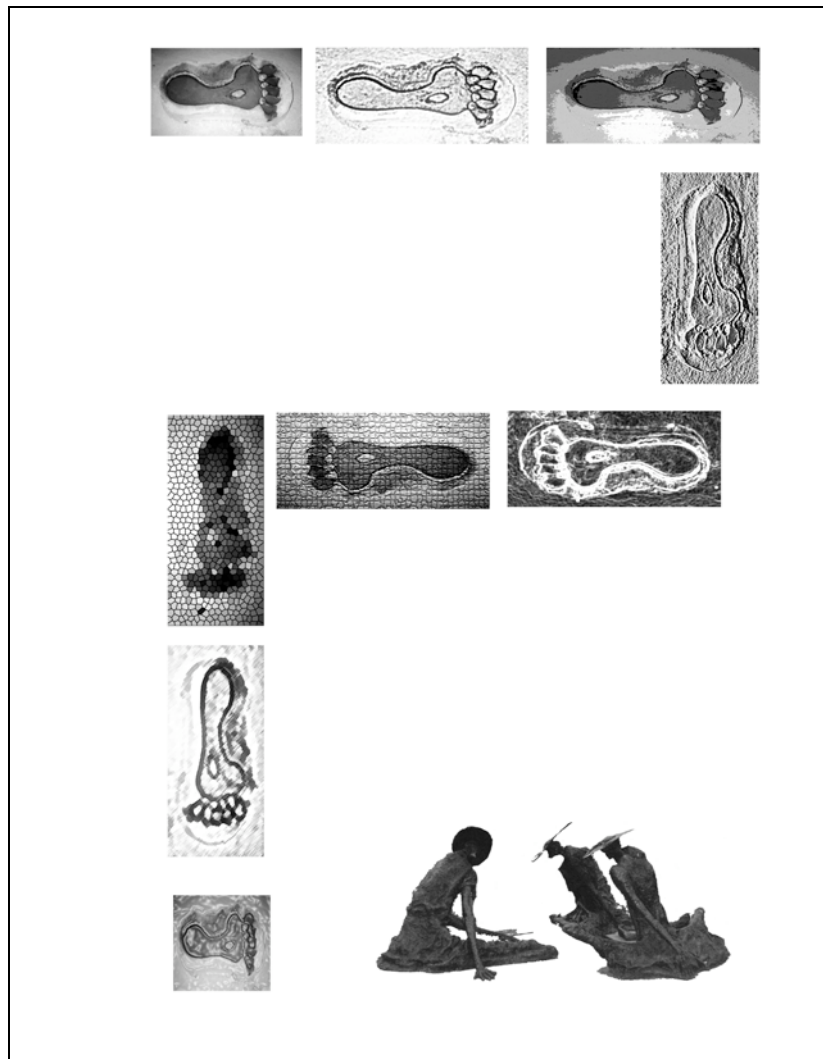
Nevertheless, at Eleusis, the mystical vision, the healing, comforting experience, could be arranged in the prescribed place at the appointed time, for all of the multitudes who were initiated into the holy Mysteries. This could be accounted for by the fact that an hallucinogenic drug came into use; this, as already mentioned, is something that religious scholars believe.

The characteristic property of hallucinogens, to suspend the boundaries between the experiencing self and the outer world in an ecstatic, emotional experience, makes it possible with their help, and after suitable internal and external preparation, as it was accomplished in a perfect way at Eleusis, to evoke a mystical experience according to plan, so to speak.

Meditation is a preparation for the same goal that was aspired to and was attained in the Eleusinian Mysteries. Accordingly it seems feasible that in the future, with the help of LSD, the mystical vision, crowning meditation, could be made accessible to an increasing number of practitioners of meditation.

I see the true importance of LSD in the possibility of providing material aid to meditation aimed at the mystical experience of a deeper, comprehensive reality. Such a use accords entirely with the essence and working character of LSD as a sacred drug.

* * * * *



Notes on Contributors

Ric Amante lives in Melrose, Massachusetts. His writing last appeared in *Cenacle* | 48 | April 2003. It was by chance that we were reunited a couple of months ago when I found a reference to him online. His return to these pages is sweet without words.

Albert Camus, born November 7, 1913 in Mondovi, Algeria, was a major 20th century writer and thinker, particularly in the philosophical arenas of existentialism and absurdism. His essay in this issue was profoundly influential on me when I was a very young man. Camus died in a car crash on January 4, 1960.

G. C. Dillon lives in Plainville, Connecticut. His fiction last appeared in *Cenacle* | 51-52 | Winter 2004. Tis excellent to welcome him back to these pages too. Scriptor Press is planning to publish a volume of his stories later in 2006.

Judih Haggai lives at Kibbutz Nir Oz in Israel. Her poetry appears regularly in these pages. *The Cenacle* was at something of a nadir before Judih's work started showing up here. Surely its better days since are due in part to her contributions.

Dr. Albert Hofmann, born January 11, 1906 in Baden, Switzerland, is a prominent scientist and best known for synthesizing LSD-25 in 1938. Hofmann is greatly regarded not only for his many significant discoveries in the field of psychotropics, but also for his clear-eyed wisdom and great empathy for all life.

Kassandra Soulard lives in Seattle, Washington. There are moments in the making this periodical when her patience or knowingness pushes an impediment aside, and the work moves along where it would not have otherwise.

Raymond Soulard, Jr. lives in Seattle, Washington. Eleven years of doing this periodical on both US coasts and in many more states of mind than I can count and yet here it is still, here I am still. Here you are still!





December 31, 2005